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THE saint DETECTIVE MAGAZINE

Edited by LESLIE CHARTERIS

Murder of a Maharajah
by CHRISTOPHER BUSH

Open All Night
by LAWRENCE G. BLOCHMAN

Walkup to Fear
by MAYSIE GREIG

For the Good of the City
by ARTHUR SOMERS ROCHE

Betrayal of the Hopeless
by JOHN CREASEY

THE GENTLE LADIES

A NEW SAINT STORY by LESLIE CHARTERIS

SOME OLD, SOME NEW — THE FINEST IN MYSTERY FICTION

A KING-SIZE PUBLICATION

WHEN I was living in London more than a couple of decades ago (notice how airily I got that off!) the ringleader of one of the less earnest but more sprightly literary sets was a young woman from Australia named Maysie Greig, who was already England's most successful and prolific novelist of what would be candidly called here the soap-opera school.

Her husband of that era embarked in self-defense on a writing career of his own at that time, and the name of Delano Ames is now one of the leaders in the mystery field in Europe. Maysie later married another distinguished mystery writer and compatriot, the late Max Murray, who regularly sold his stories to the *Saturday Evening Post*, a magazine with larger pages than ours which pays correspondingly more money but contains no better reading.

She now lives in Australia again and I have not seen her for many years; but the arrival of her manuscript WALK-UP TO FEAR was a pleasant reminder of some fine roistering and wassail which I enjoyed under her roof on a few occasions, back in those more irresponsible days. Having been married to two mystery writers, I suppose it was inevitable that she should have to prove that she could do this too, and we think you'll agree that she does it mighty well.

By one of those coincidences which sharper editors than I might avoid and more nervous ones would apologize for, we also seem to have two angles on India in this issue, with Christopher Bush's slant on a Maharajah and John Creasey's study of a more humble Bombay bookseller. So we recklessly invite you to take a Gandhi at both of them.

We also have another tough one from Hal Ellson, THIS IS FOR YOU, and solid support from old-timers Arthur Somers Roche and Lawrence G. Blochman. My own new Saint story, THE GENTLE LADIES, begins to seem almost like padding the bill. But that's the way we are these days. Lavish.

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Francis Bacon

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the gentle ladies

by . . . Leslie Charteris

The unpleasant little man had stumbled on what seemed a good thing — until the Saint became interested. . . .

"ALL I can say," Kathleen Holland said inadequately, "is that he's a *creep*."

"The world is crawling with them," smiled the Saint sympathetically. "But unfortunately it isn't a statutory offense yet. And if I tried to exterminate them all myself, just on general principles, I wouldn't have any time left to steal a living. There has to be something specific about his creepiness."

"But I thought that's what you'd be able to find out!"

Simon Templar looked at her again. She had a face with bone in it: definite cheekbones and a strong jaw, a nose short but sculptured. She wore her thick chestnut hair almost without a wave, in a kind of abbreviated pageboy bob—obviously not because it was fashionable at the time, which it wasn't, but because it suited her. Her hazel eyes were very lively and her chiseled lips framed a wide and potentially careless mouth.

"I'm a catalyst," Simon Templar said. "You know what that is, in chemistry? You throw a certain catalyst into a mixture, and nothing happens to it itself, but all hell breaks loose around it. All the other ingredients seethe up and do back-flips into new transformations. That's me. Half the time I don't have to do anything except be around. Somebody hears I'm the Saint, and I shoot a few arrows in the air, and the fireworks start." As they do this time when the Saint meets obviously haunted ladies, who must have had an interesting past.

"You'd have to tell me a lot more about him," he said. "Perhaps if you weren't so tied up with this charitable den of iniquity—"

"I can soon fix that," she said. "There are more gals trying to help around here than you could shake a swizzle stick at. I'll just tell the Mother Superior that I'm taking time out, and I'll be all yours."

She left him in the crêpe-paper arbor where he had had her alone for a few minutes, and headed quickly and decisively for the gingham-clothed central table where a bevy of other eager maidens were cajoling the wandering citizenry to buy dollops of what the hand-lettered signs proclaimed to be champagne punch, ladled from a cut-glass bowl the size of a bathtub in which had been stirred together with several gallons of miscellaneous sodas and fruit juices (the Saint's sensitive palate assured him) at least a magnum of genuine Bollinger.

Of all the unlikely surroundings in which the Saint might be discovered, a church bazaar, despite his canonical nickname, is certainly as implausible as any; but by this time he was getting so used to finding himself in improbable places that he had developed a form of philosophical passivity which might as well be emulated, if only in self-defense, by anyone who intends to follow him through many of these episodes.

The town of Santa Barbara, little more than two hours of freeway driving up the coast from Los Angeles, is California's most jealous curator of its Spanish heritage. While the great sprawling monster that was once leisurely known as *El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Angeles* has lopped off all but the last two words of its historic name and surrendered itself to modern industry and smog, Santa Barbara seems to have decided that the twentieth century is the transient guest, and to be trying like a good housekeeper to keep things as much as possible the way the Conquistadors would like to find it when they come back. In the whole city not a tenth of the streets have North American names, the most conspicuous of them being State Street, which appropriately enough is the main stem of shops and offices and suchlike parvenu incursions. But flanking it are Chapala and Anacapa, and the streets crossing it ring with such names as Cabrillo, Figueroa, Ortega, and Gutierrez. And yet with all this Hispanic tradition there is also a social cult which leans towards institutions more commonly associated with the squirearchy of Old England, such as horse shows, flower shows, garden parties, fund-raising teas, and parochial fêtes like the one

which had ensnared such an unprecedented patron as Simon Templar.

The better-looking half of the couple of old friends he was visiting had said firmly: "I've been roped into running the popgun shooting gallery all day long at this brawl, and the least you can do is drop by and relieve me for half an hour." But when he dutifully showed up, she had inspected him again and said: "There's a wicked gleam in your eye that makes me suspect that you'd be telling the kids to turn the popguns on the behinds of some of the passing dowagers. I'll let you buy me a champagne punch instead, and introduce you to a pretty girl who'll keep your mind on more grown-up ways of getting into trouble."

Thus he had met Kathleen Holland; and, after his hostess had excused herself to hurry back to her stall, what might have been a more idly flirtatious encounter had become a half-serious discussion of the creepiness of Mr. Alton Powls.

The Saint was almost automatically prejudiced against Mr. Powls, but he could be impersonal enough to realize that Mr. Powls might never even have squeezed his name into the conversation but for the reaction that the Saint's own name evoked from most people who heard it. Kathleen Holland was a real estate agent and by all ordinary criteria a down-to-earth young business woman; but she was no less ordinary in assuming that the Saint was ready to take off like a bloodhound on any scent that was offered him. However, in her case the presumption was not so hard to take.

"You see," she said, when she returned without the apron that was her badge of office, and was thereby transformed into another customer like himself, and they were strolling anonymously through the crowd in search of a more secluded place to continue the session, "I feel I'm partly responsible. I should have known there was something wrong when he asked so many questions about Aunt Flo."

"The world seems to be infested with Aunts, too," Simon observed philosophically. "But it isn't necessarily a felony to ask questions about them. What has this one done?"

"Nothing, of course. I know you don't live here, but when you meet her you'll know how ridiculous that sounds. But you can say anything you think, because she isn't really *my* aunt."

Miss Florence Warshed, it appeared, was known to everyone within her social stratum in Santa Barbara as "Aunt Flo," because that was the way she was known to the two nieces who lived with her, and that was the way she liked it, and whatever

Aunt Flo liked had a way of becoming the way things were done, at least in her nearest vicinity.

Miss Warshed had settled herself immovably upon the Santa Barbara landscape about twenty years ago, escorted by the two nieces from whom she derived her popular title, with the purchase of a large rambling house in the older but most respectable section of town, where they set up a ménage which in some other localities might have been deemed at least eccentric but which in the cloistered atmosphere of that corner of that city was only considered quaint and nostalgically delightful. For the two junior Misses Warshed, it was soon revealed to those who pursued the inquiry, were the daughters of a vaguely disreputable elder brother of Aunt Flo who abandoned them to the care of a wife who soon afterwards died of mortification or some such obsolete ailment, thus leaving their maiden aunt Flo to rear them, which she had done more devotedly than any natural mother. If Aunt Flo had ever had any procreative urges of her own, they seemed to have been completely sublimated by the responsibilities of this foster brood; and if some local amateur psychologists surmised that she had subtly instilled her own spinsterish diathesis into her charges, it could have been just as validly argued that they had grown up with androphobic prejudices of their very own, germinating from the embarrassment of having a father whom they could not even identify in a picture and whose name they had never heard mentioned except with the most icily significant restraint. At any rate, their lives had never been overtly complicated by romance, let alone marriage.

Aunt Flo had been safely past her half-century when she hit the town, and both her protégés had been well into their late thirties, so that there had been no immediate problem of fending off slavering suitors. And seemingly content to age gracefully as they had arrived, they had remained an inviolable trio while Aunt Flo decayed gradually into her more obstreperous seventies and the waifs she had sponsored faded gracefully into their late but unlamented fifties, all of them being wistfully but intolerably charming all the time. To keep themselves healthily occupied and also pay the rent, they had opened a shop in the bypassed suburb of Montecito, inevitably named *Ye Needle Nooke,* where the products of their knitting and crochet implements were on sale at outrageous prices and were regularly bought by transient tourists and an indispensable core of locals who thought

that the Warshed Sisters were just *too* sweet and should be subsidized on principle.

"And they are sweet, too," Kathleen said. "It just breaks your heart sometimes to think how much they could've given some man and never had a chance to. All right, so I should go back to the bottom of the grammar class. But you've got to meet them yourself. Come on over here."

Before he could mount an effective delaying action she was practically dragging him through the crowd again on another tangent that led to a concession which could be instantly identified as one of the prime attractions of the affair. All it was actually selling was cheaply printed cards ruled into squares in each of which appeared some random number; but the sign over the entrance said BINGO, and this magic word seemed to have been sufficient to enchant an extraordinary number of devout numerologists into purchasing one or more of these mystic plaques.

"Just one thing—don't give my real name," was about all the Saint had time and presence of mind enough to throw into her ear, before they were being welcomed into the fold by a delightfully frail and faded blonde in pastel-flowered chiffon who said: "Why, Kathleen, honey, are you going to try your luck with us? That's what I call doing your duty."

"This is Violet Warshed," Kathleen said, and completed the introduction with: "This is Mr.—er—Templeton. He's been such a good customer for the champagne punch that I thought I ought to share him a bit."

"Why, that's what I call giving till it must hurt, honey." Violet Warshed put out a soft hand that would have been only perfunctory if it had not had a slight tendency to cling. "I hope this is your lucky day, Mr. Templeton, truly I do."

She must have been quite a doll thirty-five years ago, Simon thought without disparagement. A Marilyn Monroe type in her generation, probably, wide open to caricature, but overflowing with everything that it took to evoke the protective instincts of the male. It was almost incredible that that appeal should have failed to inglutinate a husband when it was at its lushest, but it was still working in an entirely wistful way which Simon could see would only confirm the local assumption that the Warshed waifs had to be Taken Care Of.

He sat down with Kathleen at the end of one of the long tables which were occupied to the verge of capacity by a horde of philanthropists brooding over their charts of destiny and marking off occasional rectangles on them

as the fateful numbers boomed out through a badly adjusted complex of loud speakers. An iron-gray woman in the same indefinite fifties as Violet Warshed bustled up and down the aisles between the tables, repeating the numbers that were called and helping the more dim-sighted devotees of this intoxicating sport to mark the right squares on their cards. As she got down to the end of the next table she recognized Kathleen and said: "Oh, a trespasser." Then she saw the Saint and linked them together, and said: "Well, it's about time you had a good man, Kathy. Where did you find him?"

"This is Ida Warshed," Kathleen said. With the facility of practice, she went on: "And this is Mr. Templeton. He's been such a good customer that I thought—"

"Don't ever stop to think, dearie. If he looks like a good customer, he's in. What was that name again?"

Even at her age Ida Warshed had a twinkle in her eye, and one got an impression that in her extreme youth she might have been quite a handful. She was as buxom and earthy as Violet was ethereal. In fact, if they had not been introduced as sisters no one would have been likely to guess that they were even remotely related. The only theory Simon could hazard was that by some freak of genetics each of them had inherited the characteristics of one parent to the almost complete exclusion of the other—Ida perhaps being predominantly the image of the scapegrace father, while Violet might have mirrored the abandoned mother who had pined away.

"Now do you have an idea what they're like?" Kathleen asked, as Ida went on her busy way.

"Well, vaguely," said the Saint, mechanically circling a number on his card with one of the colored crayons provided for the purpose. "But—"

"That's Aunt Flo," she said, "up there on the platform."

At the focal point of the long tables where the congregation sat there was a high dais draped in bunting, not much larger than was necessary to accommodate a small table and a straight-backed chair. In the chair sat a large angular woman whose back was just as straight, even if braced by obvious tight-drawn corsets. Over the corsets she wore a black satin dress that made no attempt to be modern in length or cut, with a high boned collar of white lace and matching frills of lace at the wrists. To offset this austerity, however, her fingernails were lacquered pearl-gray, her lipstick was dark red, and her white hair had been rinsed with blue. Her face must

once have been handsome rather than pretty, but age had not hardened it; indeed, the wrinkles it had acquired seemed to have engraved it with an indelible pattern of kindliness and serenity.

She twirled a wire cage filled with numbered balls, and when it came to rest she manipulated a sort of valve at the bottom which laid a single ball on the table like an egg; she read the number without glasses, and called it into her microphone in a strong firm voice. Simon drew another circle on his card.

"For a dame of her age, she seems to be in rare shape," he remarked.

"You don't know the half of it," Kathleen said. "She must be at least seventy-five, but she drives the car to market, does all the shopping and most of the cooking at home. And don't let that Whistler's-Mother look fool you—she's never stopped being the head of the family. Violet and Ida still do what she tells them, just as if they were nearer sixteen than sixty. It's almost funny to hear them ask her if they may go to a movie, if she doesn't want to see it herself, and she tells them what time they have to be home."

"But," said the Saint, "I still don't see what all this has to do with the creep you started with, Brother Powls."

"Because ever since he came here they've been under some awful strain, as if—well, it's silly, but I can only say as if he was *haunting* them. I don't believe in that kind of hypnotism, but if it isn't that, he must have some other hold over them, and now that you've met them you can see that that sounds almost as ridiculous."

Mr. Alton Powls had come upon the scene by simply walking into the office where Kathleen Holland worked. The office opened on a pseudo-Andalusian inside patio which it shared with about a dozen shops mostly dedicated to the sale of antiques, jewelry, *objets d'art,* paintings, books, and similar preciosa, all enterprises ideally suited to a location close to but architecturally shut off from the commercial hurly-burly of State Street, where shoppers could browse at leisure in an atmosphere of olde-worlde tranquillity which did much to blunt their apperception of the fact that they were being charged strictly new-world prices. Directly across the patio were the premises of *Ye Needle Nooke;* and through its large plate-glass window, from Kathleen's window, could be plainly seen the Warshed sisters at work, Violet sewing and Ida rearranging the displays of merchandise, while Aunt Flo busied herself with correspondence or bookkeeping at a desk in the background.

"Do you happen to know

those ladies across the way?" he asked.

She had not yet identified him as a Creep, but only as an elderly gentleman not especially different from any of the other idle strollers in the courtyard, and so she agreeably told him the names. The first evidence of Creepiness he gave was in his reaction to them: she was sure that they brought a gleam of recognition which was instantly veiled.

"Would they be from Milwaukee?" he queried.

"No, they came from Kansas City."

"Was that long ago?"

"It was soon after I was born, anyway."

He looked at her calculatingly.

"They remind me of some people I knew a long time ago," he said. "I think I'll go and talk to them."

He went out and across the patio, and she could not help watching the rest from her desk. It was as graphic and at the same time as baffling as a movie on which the sound track had gone dead.

He went into *Ye Needle Nooke*, and Ida Warshed met him with the mechanical cordiality with which she would have greeted any stranger who walked in. She could only have asked, quite impersonally, what she could do for him. But his answer seemed to stop her cold. She stood there, transfixed, all the life fading out of her face. For the longest time, she seemed bereft of any power of movement, as well as speech. Then, in a most uncharacteristically feeble and helpless way, she made a beckoning gesture at Violet.

Violet put down her sewing and came over, wearing the same perfunctory smile in her more fragile and wispier way. Mr. Powls spoke again. Violet froze as Ida had done, and then looked at Ida helplessly. Then both of them, by simultaneous consent, looked appealingly at Aunt Flo.

Aunt Flo put down her pen and came over from her desk. But on her candid competent face there was no more immediate response than had been shown by either of her nieces. Until Mr. Powls repeated something that he had obviously said before.

Aunt Flo also froze, momentarily. But there was no one beyond her to appeal to. And so after that moment she began to talk, quite volubly, in a tone that the frequent shakings of her head made vehemently negative. But Mr. Powls only seemed to persist with whatever he was maintaining. There was another Creepy quality, Kathleen thought, in the implacable way he stood his ground, answering mostly with shrugs that somehow had an offensive insincerity.

Presently he turned and left the shop and sauntered away. But after his departure there was none of the complacency of three embattled women who had triumphantly repulsed an obnoxious male. There was the inevitable first minute when they all talked at once, but it quickly subsided into a bleak despondency in which they all seemed at a total loss for anything to say. Ida kicked moodily at a chair-leg, Violet dabbed the corners of her eyes with a handkerchief, and Aunt Flo sat down at her desk again, heavily, and rested her forehead on her clenched hands.

Then Violet happened to glance straight across the patio at Kathleen, and said something to Ida, who glanced in the same direction; and Kathleen suddenly felt like an eavesdropper and buried herself in the papers she had been working on before the interruption.

Later that afternoon, as the shops on the patio were preparing to close up, Aunt Flo came over on the pretext of asking if Kathleen could recommend a part-time gardener to take over some of the heavy work on the flower beds which were the Warsheds' principal hobby and exercise as well as their most harmless pride. After that gambit had served its purpose, she said with transparent casualness: "What did you think of that man who came looking for us a little while ago?"

"I didn't know he was looking for you," Kathleen said. "He told me he thought he knew you from somewhere away back."

She recited her conversation with Mr. Powls almost verbatim, but without any commentary.

"Is that all he said?"

"Yes—as far as I can remember."

Aunt Flo's bright birdlike eyes raked through her like affectionate needles.

"I think he's a crank," she said. "He tried to insist that he knew us, but none of us ever saw him before. We couldn't all three be mistaken. You'd better watch out if you see him again. It's those kind of people who are never suspected until they turn out to be Monsters."

Although the word Monster was no more than an earlier synonym for Creep, it was not that echo of her own thinking that brushed Kathleen with a clammy chill. It was the incontrovertible certainty, after what she had recently witnessed, that Aunt Flo was lying.

Four days passed before she saw Mr. Powls again. She happened to look up, and he was back in *Ye Needle Nooke,* talking to the three ladies. He seemed to have been showing them something like a fairly large newspaper clipping, which he took back and folded carefully

and put away in his wallet. Only a few more words were spoken after that, before he turned and came out; she could see very little of how they acted after his exit, for he blocked the view almost completely by walking straight across the patio to her office.

She tried not to appear too hurried over her conventional "Good afternoon" but couldn't help going on, disingenuous though it had to sound, with: "I hear you didn't know the Warsheds after all."

"Oh, but I do," he said. "And they remember me now. I've been able to convince them."

She flicked a glance through the window, but could only see that the ladies were in some kind of huddle at the back of the shop.

"I've been back to Kansas City since I saw you last," he said. "But I've decided that Santa Barbara has it beat. I think I'll settle down here. Could you show me a very small furnished cottage or a nice little apartment?"

She took him to a couple of places she had listed, and he was delighted with the second, a sub-let that had been put in her hands only the previous day. Then came the routine question of references.

"The Misses Warshed should be good enough for anyone here, shouldn't they?" he said blandly, and she would have sworn that he struggled to hide his malicious enjoyment of a private joke.

However, she now had an unimpeachable reason for reopening the subject with Aunt Flo.

"We were mistaken," Aunt Flo said with tight lips. "It's terribly easy to forget things after twenty years, especially when you get to be my age. But of course we knew Mr. Powls back in Kansas City. I hope you'll be able to put out of your mind the things I said about him the other day, because it's most embarrassing to me to think that I could have been so wrong."

She was very gallant, very much the *grande dame.* Beside her, the sisters nodded in docile corroboration.

"Then I can take it that he's all right—I mean, he'll be good for the rent, and all that sort of thing?"

"Yes, dear, he will be."

"What kind of business was he in, in Kansas City?"

Violet and Ida looked at each other, and then mutely at Aunt Flo, leaving her to answer.

"He was a general business man," Aunt Flo said firmly. "He was mixed up in lots of big deals. I don't profess to understand these things that men get involved in. But he was very successful."

"He was a big spender, too," Ida put in.

Violet nodded. And that was

all they had to say. Which in itself was strange enough, for normally they loved to gossip about people—of course in the nicest way.

Mr. Powls himself was no more communicative when Kathleen tried to question him.

"I've been in and out of so many things," he said, with a carefully impressive air of modesty in his vagueness. "Buying and selling—importing and exporting—stocks and bonds. But I'm retired now. So it would bore me as much to tell you my life story as you'd be bored listening to it. And it doesn't really matter, does it? You only want to be sure that I won't have wild parties or move out with the landlord's furniture, and I know the Misses Warshed have vouched for that."

She did not know how to press the question further without seeming gratuitously impertinent.

"So," she told the Saint, "he's been here ever since. He pays his rent on the dot, and he takes good care of the place. He asked me to get him a cleaning woman to come in once a week, so I was able to check on that through her. Sometimes I see him around town, and he's always perfectly at ease and polite. Perhaps he *is* just a retired business man leading a quiet bachelor life, but—"

Simon drew another circle on his card.

"Presumably he pays the rent by check—you wouldn't have thought of making any inquiries at his bank?"

She actually giggled.

"*Touché*. That's how horribly inquisitive I can be when I start. I told them I'd been asked to get a bank reference on him, but between what they didn't know and what they weren't allowed to say I didn't get very much. But his account is quite small, and he mostly deposits cash."

The Saint's brows suddenly drew together.

"Cash? You have an item there."

"That's what I thought. He isn't working in any job, that I know of."

"Does he see much of the Warsheds, since they've decided they know him?"

"I've seen him at their house twice," Kathleen said. "They invite me sometimes, when they have a little party. You wouldn't think they'd want an extra girl, but they're very considerate about things like that, and if for any reason they've got a man coming who's younger than any of them, they beg me to come and prove that they aren't ganging up on him themselves. Well, each time, it was obvious that the idea was to help Mr. Powls meet some local people. And yet I just *knew* that they weren't a bit happy about it. Not that they didn't try to do it well. In fact, they were trying too hard—they were

much too busy and eager and chattery, even for them. As if they were under a frightful strain and trying to cover up. And yet he wasn't pointing a gun at them, like the gangsters did at the family in that movie."

"There are metaphorical guns, too," Simon said. "How did the Creep behave?"

"Just like anybody else. Only he kept making *me* think of a cat watching a cage of birds. I suppose by this time you're convinced that I'm thoroughly neurotic and—"

The Saint said, abruptly: "Bingo!"

He stood up, waving his card.

"Would you bring your card up here, please," said Aunt Flo.

Kathleen recovered from her momentary blankness and went to the dais with him to introduce him.

"A friend of yours? How nice, dear," said Aunt Flo, nevertheless checking the numbers which the Saint had ringed with the emotionless efficiency of a seasoned cashier. "Yes, this is right." She said into her microphone: "We have a winner, girls. Pick up the old cards, and we'll start a new game." She counted out fifty dollars from a partitioned tray in front of her, and gave them to the Saint, and said: "Congratulations, Mr. Templeton. Are you having a good time?"

"So good that it doesn't seem right to make a profit out of it." Simon shuffled the prize money, put half of it in his pocket, refolded the rest, and held it out to the old lady. "May I put this back in the fund, as a donation?"

"You're very generous. That's the kind of man to look for, Kathleen, dear—one who has fun with his money." She looked at the Saint again with her keen bright eyes, for the first time as if she were seeing him personally. "And this is a real man, too. I can tell. If I were forty years younger, I'd be after him myself."

"You don't have to be a day younger, Aunt Flo," said the Saint genially. "I'm a charter member of the Chesterfield Club."

The little color that was in Miss Warshed's face drained out, leaving it a white mask in which the discreetly applied rouge over her cheeks stood out like patches of raw paint. Her lips quivered, and she held on to the table as if to steady herself in her chair, so tightly that even her knuckles and fingertips blanched under the pressure.

"I don't think I quite follow that," she said.

"Oh, hadn't you heard of it?" said the Saint innocently, apparently unaware even of the bewildered way that Kathleen looked from Aunt Flo to him. "Lord Chesterfield was an Eng-

lish pundit who was rated pretty hippy a hundred or two years ago. He gave his name to the sofa but not to the cigarette. He also wrote a series of letters to his son, full of profound advice and wisdom, which were published in book form and bestowed by doting parents on Heaven knows how many other equally bored young men. One of his best remembered tips was that older ladies were the best ones to fall in love with, because they appreciated it so much more. I've always been a rooter for his club for that."

Aunt Flo relaxed quite slowly.

"Indeed." Her lips cracked in a smile, but her eyes were still haunted. "For a moment I simply couldn't imagine what you were talking about. That's very charming. And so true. But I'm sure the young ones already appreciate you more than it's good for you. Are you staying here long?"

"Only a day or two."

"I'm sorry—it was nice meeting you."

She gave him her hand, all graciousness and poise again, and by then it was hard to believe that only a few seconds ago she had seemed to be transfixed with stark terror.

"What on earth is this Chesterfield Club business?" Kathleen demanded as soon as they were at a safe distance.

"You heard me," Simon said. "As a student of all the great philosophers and bores—"

"Don't give me that," she said. "I saw what it did to her when you first mentioned it."

Simon handed over a dollar in exchange for two ice-cream cones which were being practically forced into their hands. He gave his to the first infant that passed, who promptly squashed it on its mother's best afternoon dress.

"You're much too young to remember," said the Saint happily, "but back in the wildest Prohibition days of Kansas City, the Chesterfield Club was an institution that travelers came from all over to see. It was a place where the tired business man could really get a lift with his lunch. All the waitresses were stark naked."

"Oh." Kathleen gulped. "Now I can see why Aunt Flo was shocked."

"Would you say 'shocked' was the word?" Simon asked gently.

He lighted a cigarette and stared through a veil of smoke at the edifying spectacle of a bejeweled dowager leaning over the rail of an enclosure called Fortune's Fishpond, cane pole in hand, angling with intense concentration for a bottle of Bollinger.

"Even the most sheltered ladies in town at the time must have heard of it," he said. "If a man referred to it in front of

them, I can picture them being righteously scandalized, or freezing into the We Are Not Amused reaction. But can you see any of them looking downright terrified, as if the next thing they heard might be the end of the world?"

"But it *couldn't* have meant anything personal to Aunt Flo! I mean—"

"No, not that." He grinned. "I don't think she was ever a waitress at the Chesterfield Club. Even that long ago, she'd 've been a bit old for the job."

"Then what do you make of it?"

"You wanted to get me interested," he said, "and you have. How can I meet Brother Powls?"

This could not have been an insuperable problem at the worst; but since it was that kind of charity fair, and Santa Barbara is that kind of place, it proved even easier than he would have anticipated. They were continuing their idle stroll through the grounds, discussing the best pretext they might use for dropping in at Mr. Powls' apartment, when Kathleen suddenly clutched Simon's arm.

"Talk of the devil," she said, "there he is—over there, in the light gray jacket."

Mr. Alton Powls did not look much like a devil, except as he might be depicted in the more sophisticated modern type of fantasy. From his mildly jaunty Panama hat down to his polished black and white shoes, he looked like a typical member of the county set in which he was imperturbably working for acceptance. His attendance at this garden carnival, properly viewed, was not even surprising at all: on the contrary, it was a social obligation which he could hardly have avoided.

Only the Saint's peculiarly analytic eye would have noted, as they approached on a calculated collision course, a certain revealing shuffle in the way Mr. Powls walked, and the no less typical way his glances roved restlessly over a wide area with little corresponding movement of his head.

"Why, good afternoon, Mr. Powls," Kathleen said as they met.

He had seen them coming already, but he raised his hat with the most urbane spontaneity.

"Miss Holland. How nice to see you taking a day off."

He was probably not much over sixty, a thin man with a sedate little bulge below his belt. His somewhat lumpy face was clean shaven and pallid, his hair sparse and lank. His lips were tight and gristly, and scarcely moved when he spoke. Simon could see the superficial reasons for describing him as a Creep, but his manner was easy and polite.

Kathleen said: "This is Mr. Tem—"

"Templar," said the Saint. He amplified it, very clearly: "Simon Templar."

"Simon Templar," Mr. Powls repeated. "Somehow, the name sounds familiar."

His fingers, which had gone out automatically to meet the Saint's cordial hand, lay in the Saint's grasp like cold sausages.

"You could have heard it," Simon said affably.

"You couldn't—by any chance—be any relative of that man they call the Saint?"

"I am the Saint," Simon beamed.

Those who know the Saint at all well will recognize at once that this was totally unlike him. But he did it this time, and Mr. Powls retrieved his hand quickly, as if afraid that it might not be given back.

"Are you really?" said Mr. Powls. He coughed, to clear a trace of hoarseness from his voice. "But you aren't expecting to find anything to merit your attention here, are you?"

"I never know where I'll find those things," said the Saint cheerfully. "But I'm always on the lookout for them. And there's no place like a town full of respectable retired people. They all buy each other's stories, but who ever checks on them? A guy could come here straight from Leavenworth and give out that he was a retired bible salesman, and no one would even ask him to prove it by naming the four Gospels."

"That's very interesting," said Mr. Powls faintly.

"Not that I think there's anything crooked about this shindig," Simon went on exuberantly. "In fact, it must be on the level, because they just let me win a pot at Bingo. Look."

He pulled out of his pocket the card which he had kept as a souvenir, and thrust it upon Mr. Powls in such a way that the other was virtually forced to take it from him.

"That's wonderful," said Mr. Powls, returning the card as quickly as he could. "Really, it gives me an inspiration. I must go there and try my luck. If you'll excuse me." He raised his hat to Kathleen again, and inclined his head to the Saint. "Perhaps we'll meet again later."

"I hope so," Simon said heartily. "Let me know if you see any other old lags around."

Mr. Powls moved away, not hurriedly, but without looking back.

"I'm getting rather baffled," Kathleen said, "and now I don't think I'm enjoying it."

"You got me started," Simon reminded her. "And I got some results."

"I didn't see much, except that you upset him."

"Does that matter? You said he was a Creep, anyway."

"But you were almost objectionable."

"No. A bit corny and collegiate, maybe. A shade heavy-handed with the humor. But I had to be. I wanted to start something. A respectable citizen may be bored by the kind of kidding that suggests he's an old jailbird, but he isn't offended, because it's too ridiculous to take seriously. Only an old lag would be jolted, because it's too close to home."

"You think he *is* an ex-convict?"

"I've no more doubt about it. But I saw it first in the way he walks and talks and looks around."

"Then why did you go on—the way you did?"

Simon shrugged. His sky-blue eyes were altogether lazy now, and seemed to be ranging perspectives far outside the eucalyptus trees and formal hedges of the manorial grounds which had been turned over to the benefit.

"I'm a catalyst," he said. "You know what that is, in chemistry? You throw a certain catalyst into a certain mixture, and nothing happens to it itself, but all hell breaks loose around it. All the other ingredients seethe up and do back-flips into new transformations. That's me. Half the time I don't have to do anything except be around. Somebody hears I'm the Saint, and I shoot a few arrows in the air, and the fireworks start. Like this. It's no crime to be an ex-convict, unless you got out through a tunnel. Or to be a Creep, even. And I don't know what Aunt Flo is sweating out. So there's nothing much I could do about 'em. And yet I've got an idea that events are already on the march."

She was almost exasperatedly incredulous.

"And now they'll take care of themselves. There must be more to it than that!"

"Well, there may be a little more," he smiled. "Let's go and get a real drink somewhere, and on the way you could show me where Brother Powls lives."

But when they parted later he had still managed to evade being pinned down to anything more positive than a promise to pick her up for lunch the next day.

He was obligated to dine with his friends at their home; but afterwards—having made conversation about everything except the problem with which Kathleen Holland had presented him—he made the excuse of having to take an important letter to the post office to make sure it would go out by the earliest possible mail. He had no such letter and did not even go near the post office, but drove instead to the small new building that Kathleen had shown him, which was pleasantly situated a block from Cabrillo Boulevard within

sight of the ocean and the pier and yacht harbor. There was a light in the upper corner that she had pointed out, and he went up the outside stairway and knocked on the door.

Mr. Powls opened it, and his jaw dropped.

"What. . . . Yes, Mr. Templar. I was hardly expecting—"

"May I come in?" said the Saint, and went in irresistibly.

"What can I do for you, sir?"

"For a start," said the Saint, "you can give me any folding money you've got on you."

He kept one hand deep in his jacket pocket, not being so crude as to stretch it out of shape by making anything point through it, but the suggestion was just as effective to Mr. Powls' flickering eyes.

"What is this—a stick-up?"

"Call it what you like, Alton, but sprout the lettuce."

"I think it'd be better if I called the police. You wouldn't shoot me for the few dollars I've got on me."

"Do you remember me making you admire my Bingo card this afternoon, chum?" Simon said. "I did that to get your fingerprints on it. You may not believe it, but I have all sorts of useful connections — even here. Those prints are already on their way to Washington," he elaborated mendaciously, "only I haven't told anyone yet where they came from. If you feel like calling the police, I won't stop you. By the time we all get to the station there should be a make from the FBI, and we can go on from there."

Mr. Powls took a crumpled fold of currency from his trouser pocket and passed it over.

"Nobody ever told me the Saint went in for this kind of thing," he sneered.

"These are rugged days, Alton. What with inflated prices and a confiscatory income tax, it isn't so easy to live like a millionaire any more without a little side money."

"But why pick on me?"

Simon had been scrutinizing each piece of paper money in the roll he had taken and separating it into two slim packs clipped between different fingers. Now he fanned out one sheaf like a poker hand.

"I marked all these bills with two little tears close together near one corner, just before I gave them to Aunt Flo this afternoon as a charity donation. How did you get them?"

"She gave them to me. I was lucky too."

"You certainly were. But that goes back to when you first hit Santa Barbara, and ran into a meal ticket when you were just window-shopping. What were you in stir for, comrade?"

"You'll find out soon enough. It was about some uranium stock I sold. There shouldn't of

been any squawk at all, but I wrote something in a letter and they used it to hang a federal rap on me."

"And now you're out, you've switched from the bunco racket to blackmail. That sums it up, doesn't it?"

"You're talking to yourself."

"And even taking it out of charity donations."

"She gave it to me," Powl repeated. "I don't know where it came from. If she snitched it where she shouldn't, what does that make her?"

"A scared old lady," said the Saint. "What have you got on her?"

Mr. Powls' cartilaginous lips curled. He was regaining confidence quickly.

"I should tell you—so that you can take over. You dig that up for yourself, if you're so wise. You can't beat it out of me here, without one of the neighbors'll call the cops, and you don't want that any more than I do. Leave me alone to handle it, and I might even give you a little cut."

The Saint's smile was terribly benevolent.

"I'm only humanly inquisitive about Aunt Flo," he said. "But I'm just as humanly certain that whatever her guilty secret is she's done a great job of living it down for twenty years. And you should have heard that blackmail is one of the crimes I rate among the wickedest in the world and among the least adequately punished by the law."

He held Mr. Alton Powls by the coat lapel and shook him back and forth quite gently, while the forefinger of his other hand tapped him on the chest for emphasis; and his eyes were sword-points of sapphire in the angelic kindliness of his face.

"I shall give you twelve hours to get out of Santa Barbara, and a few more to be out of the state of California," he said. "And if I run into you after that, the only cut I shall take will be in your throat."

He went out without a backward glance.

He got into his car and drove purposefully away, knowing full well that he was watched from the window above; but after four blocks he circled around and came quietly down an alley to coast to a stop with his lights out in its blackest patch of shadow from which he could watch the building he had just left.

When Mr. Powls came out a few minutes later, and drove off in a small car from an open garage under one end of the building, Simon did not even have to be cautious about following him. Unburdened with luggage of any kind, Mr. Powls was certainly not rushing to beat the liberal deadline he had been given. There was only one place

where he could have been headed, other than the one which could have been generically described as Out of There, and Simon set his own course for it by another route.

If the Saint had not been quite so confident about it, it is barely possible that Mr. Alton Powls might be alive today. Simon knew the address of the Warshed ménage, which was available to anyone who could read a telephone directory; and having ascertained that, he had not bothered to ask Kathleen Holland to show it to him. He thought he knew his way around the Montecito district fairly well, and he had driven a score of times over the road on which their house stood. The one thing he had overlooked was that he had only driven over it and not in search of a specific destination on it; and he had temporarily forgotten the penchant of denizens of even less traditionally aloof areas than this for secreting their street numbers in minuscule figures in the obscurest possible location, whether to discourage process servers or poor relations. Thus he made two abortive passes at his target, each time made slower by the fact that he did not want to arrive with a triumphant roar, before he positively identified the right entrance. And then he had to drift two hundred yards past it, and find a wider place in the road to park, before he could walk back and enter the rustic gates on foot.

By which time, perhaps, Mr. Alton Powls had already been gathered to his fathers, if an overworked recording angel could put the finger on them.

At any rate, he looked dead enough, as the Saint saw him after threading a catlike way to the house which stood completely secluded from the road within its ramparts of tall clipped hedges—after circumnavigating Mr. Powls' small car which by this time was cooling in the driveway, and high-stepping delicately over odorous flower beds, and almost falling into a treacherous excavation in the middle of a small patch of lawn, and finally reaching the draped living-room window from which the light came, and selecting the one marginal crack in the curtains through which he could steal the widest wedge-shaped view of the interior.

Mr. Alton Powls was dead on the carpet, with blood welling from a dent in his cranium, and Aunt Flo standing over him with a poker in her hand, and the two comparatively junior Misses observing the scene with respectful approbation.

In contravention of all the time-honored legends about old maids, the French windows were not even latched. Simon opened them at once, and made an in-

evitably sensational entrance through the drapes which wrung stifled screams from Violet and Ida. Only Aunt Flo stood silent and undaunted.

"I'm very sorry," he said. "This is entirely my fault."

"What are we to understand by that, Mr. Templar?—he told us your real name."

"I knew he was blackmailing you, but I was curious to know how. The easiest way to find out seemed to be to follow him here and eavesdrop a little. But when I started the routine that I figured would make him come here, I didn't know that I'd have the answer even before he arrived. I picked his pocket just before I left him a few minutes ago, and here's what I found when I had a chance to look."

He produced Mr. Powls' wallet and unfolded a newspaper clipping from it, which he had read under a shielded flashlight while he waited in the alley. It could only be the same clipping which Kathleen Holland had described Mr. Powls exhibiting in *Ye Needle Nooke.* It was from the Kansas City *Star*, under a 1930 dateline, and described a raid on one of the most elegant local brothels. There was also a picture of some of the principal cultprits being arraigned in night court. The accused madam was plainly identified as Florence Warshed, and the likeness was unmistakable even after more than a quarter-century. Among the other girls, less easily recognizable, were two others modestly named as Violet Smith and Ida Jones.

Simon handed the clipping to Aunt Flo, who barely glanced at it and let Ida take it and pass it to Violet.

"I thought you'd like to burn it yourselves," said the Saint.

Aunt Flo had not let go the poker, but her grip was perceptibly less rigid.

"I've heard that you're a man who might understand some things that ordinary people wouldn't," she said steadily. "I always ran a good house, if you know what I mean. But after Repeal I could see the handwriting on the wall. I could afford to retire. Violet and Ida were getting a bit too old for the best clients, and yet it wasn't a good time for them to take over a house on their own. They'd been with me longest of all my girls —in fact, they might just as well have been my own nieces. When the time came, we found that none of us wanted to split up and go it alone. After all, we didn't have any place to go—we were the only real family any of us had left. So we decided to stick together. We got in my car and headed west, and soon after we found this town we knew it was for us. We could settle down and nobody would ever dream we'd ever been any

different from all we wanted to be from there on."

"You only made one slip that might have started me wondering, before I tried you on the Chesterfield Club," Simon remarked with incurably professional acuity. "The slant you all have about people being good spenders. But not many people would notice it—and you were right, this is one of the last places in the country where you'd be likely to run into an old client. Even that mightn't 've been fatal—most pillars of this community would be too worried about whether you'd keep your mouth shut to open their own. But it had to be this Alton Powls."

"He was always a cheap grifter and I'd be ashamed to class him with my good clients," said Aunt Flo. "But after he had the luck to spot us, and even went back and dug up that newspaper article to make sure he could rub it in, he's been taking us for a hundred dollars a week."

Simon nodded.

"Kathleen guessed he was giving you trouble, but she was only worried about you. She thinks you're wonderful, and so do I. So I took it upon myself to give him my best warning, to lay off you and chisel his chips somewhere else. I was betting that this would send him hustling right over here to put the last big bite on you, but I was planning to be in the wings myself."

He bent and examined what was left of Mr. Powls more conscientiously, for pulse and heartbeat, of which he verified that there were neither.

"He phoned and said he had to see us at once," Aunt Flo related. "Then when he got here he told us something about you calling on him. He wanted to see our bank books—he said we'd have to draw out every cent we could raise and give it to him before he left in the morning. And then we could get a mortgage on this place, which would take longer, and send him some more when he wrote to us."

"That's what I expected."

"The girls were trying to talk him out of it, but I knew he'd never lay off as long as he lived, so I picked up the poker and fixed that," said Aunt Flo defiantly, but her voice broke for the first time.

The Saint took the poker from her without resistance, wiped it carefully on Mr. Powls' neat gray jacket, and put it back in the fireplace.

"I'd probably have done the same thing myself, if I'd got here in time," he said. "Or something like it. There are only three ways to stop a blackmailer, but only fools go on paying him, and it would be asking too much for you to dare him to tell the worst. . . . I noticed an

interesting hole in your lawn as I was sneaking up on you. Did you have any plans for it?"

"We were getting ready to plant a Chinese elm," said Aunt Flo wistfully. "Quite a large and expensive one, but we needed more shade for the fuchsias."

"I'm afraid you'll just have to make it another flower-bed now," said the Saint sympathetically. He searched for Mr. Powls' keys and thoughtfully took possession of them before he picked up the body. "I won't try to cover him very deeply tonight, because I'll have to run back to his apartment and pack up all his personal things to bury with him, so that it'll look as if he simply blew town for mysterious reasons of his own. Also the people I'm staying with are expecting me back, and I can't stretch a story about a flat tire too far. But I'll be here first thing in the morning with some plants from a nursery, and make a slap-up job of it. Why don't you all go to bed and get a good sleep?"

The account he gave Kathleen Holland the next day of his final interview with Mr. Alton Powls was not fundamentally fictitious, but it took advantage of certain major omissions.

"I don't think we should pry too hard into Aunt Flo's awful secret," he said. "It probably isn't anything that'd scare anybody but her, anyhow. All I know is that I put the fear of God into your creepy friend, and if you drop by his apartment this afternoon I bet you'll find he's already done a flit."

Having left Mr. Powls' car parked near the railroad station, he was prepared to let any other perfunctory inquirers take the trail from there.

"I almost feel let down," Kathleen said disappointedly. "I was half hoping you'd do something brilliant and discover that he was Violet and Ida's black-sheep father."

"If I had, I wouldn't even tell you," said the Saint darkly. "And don't even hint to Aunt Flo that I've talked to you at all. It would only worry her. But between you and me, I stopped at her house this morning and told her who I was and that I was sure she wouldn't have any more trouble."

"You looked so hot when you got here," Kathleen said, "I thought you'd been doing something much more violent than that."

"Believe it or not," said the Saint complacently, "before I was through she had me with a spade in my hands, working like a bloody grave-digger. I tell you, I get into the damnedest things."

murder of a maharajah

by . . . Christopher Bush

"If one word of this gets out, sir, I lose my job. But it was like this. I'll give it to you straight." And he talked. . . .

DIAMONDS, says the song, are a girl's best friend. This is a brief account of a Case where diamonds were nobody's friend. There were only a couple of them and not enormous at that, and yet they caused three deaths —they and the suspicions of one woman and the pride of another. But to get on with the story.

It was late one foggy December night when George—Chief Superintendent—Wharton rang me from the Yard.

"Glad you're still up," he said. "Can you come to the Ritz-Plaza? Something peculiar's happened. Clarty of the Special Branch'll be coming too."

The fog made me take more than what should have been about six minutes but I was there first. I was introduced to Clarty when the other two came in. The hotel manager was hovering anxiously by the lifts but that didn't stop Wharton telling me why we were there. An Indian, registered as a Mr. Malam, had been stabbed. But he wasn't a Mr. Malam: he was the Maharajah of Serindapor, staying in-

Ludovic Travers, that polite representative of the politer classes, becomes involved in another polite—but very important—murder. The Maharajah of Serindapor had been, to put it mildly, one of the less dedicated Maharajahs, with more basic than spiritual interests. The problem was not to discover who had done away with his unpleasant Highness: the problem was what to do next.

cognito. Clarty told me tritely that there were good maharajahs and bad. This one had been of the nastier kind.

We went up to the first floor. Malam, as we'll call him, had a suite of four rooms—a bedroom and lounge for himself and a small bedroom and a kind of workroom for his Eurasian valet. Malam was lying near a kneehole writing desk in the lounge, a smallish revolver on the carpet beside him. Old Doc. Menzies was there and two or three Yard men. Malam was wearing a dark lounge suit. He looked about thirty: his cheeks fat, his coloring a pale coffee, his hair and wisp of moustache jet black.

"Dead about half an hour before I got here," Menzies said. "That makes it about a quarter to ten."

It didn't take long to reconstruct the murder, thanks to prints and the help of the manager. The knife was a long, thin-bladed paper-knife that was always on the desk and it had no prints. Someone wearing gloves must have used it to strike the blow. The revolver had Malam's prints on it, and a drawer from which it had come was partly open. In the pile of the carpet were the marks of scuffling feet, and a small table lay on its side. When the valet told us the revolver was Malam's and kept in that drawer, our reconstruction of things was this. Someone had called on Malam and Malam had gone for the revolver. The bruises on Malam's wrists showed that the someone had closed with him, twisted the revolver from his grasp and then grabbed the paper-knife and stabbed him.

The valet's story was interesting. His Highness, as he called him, was dining in the hotel that night but he had given the valet the evening off and had told him not to be back till a quarter past ten. To save time I may say that the valet's account of his own evening was found to be true. He had come back to the hotel at precisely the right time and had found his master dead.

The manager had been making enquiries and thought he knew who Malam's caller had been—a distinguished looking Indian gentleman who at about half-past nine had been seen going up the main stairs from the foyer. Only a back view had been seen but he was tall and the impression was that he was a man of fifty or sixty. The valet knew of no such man. It was he who told us that nothing was missing except His Highness's wallet—a handsome calfskin affair with the name Malam inset in small diamonds. Since a fine ruby ring was on Malam's finger and a platinum and gold-inlaid watch in his waistcoat pocket, the killing could hardly

have arisen out of a robbery. Also the keys, still in his pocket, unlocked a small safe in which was a valuable collection of jewelry.

"Whoever struggled with Malam ought to have a few bruises and lacerations too," Menzies said. "Wonder why Malam didn't holler for help."

"Well, it's your headache, not mine," Wharton told Clarty. "Pass the word if there's anything we can do."

I'd been looking at the almost new sheet of blotting-paper on the desk. There were faint marks on it as if something had been recently blotted. The valet thought the sheet had been spotless when he had left earlier in the evening.

"Let's hold it up to the mirror," Wharton said.

We held it up and all we could make out was the last word, and even that took a bit of reconstructing.

"*Scoundrel,*" Clarty said. "Wonder who *he* was writing to and calling a scoundrel?"

He enlarged on the theme when he went out with us to the corridor.

"Talk about the pot calling the kettle black? That Malam was pretty much of a blackguard himself according to what we know of him in India."

Wharton and I parted outside the hotel. He said he'd get out a description of the missing wallet, just in case. The fog was denser than ever and it was midnight when I got back to the flat.

I was sound asleep the next morning when the telephone woke me. I hooked on my glasses and the time was barely seven o'clock. Wharton was on the line.

"Can you get to St. Martin's Hospital? A drunk was brought in there last night and died soon after. That Malam wallet was in his pocket."

The hospital's only a stone's throw from the flat. I made my way there through the fog. And here it might be as well to explain why I was apparently at Wharton's beck and call. The fact is that I've worked with him for years on murder cases as what the Yard calls an unofficial expert, and when anything breaks he gives me a ring. If it's not important enough for one as high up as himself to bother about, well, that's that. The Malam affair wasn't ours, for instance: that was the concern of Clarty and the Special Branch. But the Case of this drunk looked as if it might concern Wharton. We didn't know. We just had to find out.

I had to wait quite a time for Wharton who'd been to divisional headquarters getting the facts of the Case, but they know me at the hospital because my

wife's been on one of their committees for several years. What Wharton had learned was that the man had been found in Mansfield Street by a constable. He'd been clinging to a lamp-post, clutching his throat, and the constable had thought he was either drunk or suffering from asthma. Then the man had collapsed and the constable had had him brought to the hospital. There was no clue on him as to his identity but in his overcoat pocket was that wallet.

We saw various people and this is what they told us. The man had died, probably of heart failure, as he was being carried in, and there'd be a post-mortem that morning. We went to the morgue to have a look at him. He was a man of about seventy with very short graying hair. He had a fine, clean-cut face and his well-kept hands were certainly not those of a manual worker.

"Why are the eyes so staring?" I asked.

"Might be all sorts of things," the house-surgeon told me. "The p.m. will tell us that."

We looked at his clothes. The dark suit had seen considerable wear and the shoes had recently been soled and heeled. The tabs had been removed from his jacket and overcoat and he didn't even have a handkerchief.

"Mind if I send a photographer along?" Wharton said. "I'd like to get him into the early morning papers. And let me know the p.m. result as soon as you can."

George had also had no breakfast so we had the meal together at my flat. He'd brought that wallet with him. It's contents were merely notes, thirty-five pounds in all.

"Clarty'd better have this," he said. "It looks as if it might be tied in with the Malam affair. But those missing tabs are what're worrying me."

"An attempt to conceal his identity?"

"Not a doubt of it. But how'd he get that wallet? He wasn't the chap we can call Turban. There wasn't a bruise on his wrists or anywhere."

"He couldn't have just picked that wallet up," I said. "The concealment of identity shows there was more to it than that. But if he was Turban, where'd he change his clothes?"

"That'd be easy," Wharton said. "When he left Malam's room he could've slipped into a hotel bathroom. He could wash off the face coloring and stick the turban in his pocket. That's why he wasn't seen leaving."

"But those clothes weren't the ones Turban wore," I said. "There had to be some changing done somewhere."

George asked me why I was worrying. We'd have a whole

lot of answers once someone identified him.

That identification was to be no later than that evening. I found George alone in his room.

"Thought you'd better hear the p.m. result before we saw the parson who's waiting," he told me. "That chap last night wasn't drunk or asthmatic. He'd been given a stiff whiskey with atropine in it. In other words, he was poisoned."

I was surprised and yet I wasn't. There'd been those staring eyes, and we ought to have guessed at murder after that attempt to conceal identity. Wharton was saying no word of that poisoning ought to be mentioned to the parson who'd just come in from the hospital morgue. We'd talk about a bad heart and hear what was told us.

The Rev. Howard Crewe, vicar of St. Philip's, Pimlico, was a tall stooping man, quiet of manner and kindly of face. He said the dead man was his old friend Montague Furloe. I thought I knew the name.

"You probably do," he said. "Furloe was an actor. What I think one calls character parts. His wife was a distant cousin of my dear wife's. They both died about three years ago, and Monty, as we always called him, took his loss very hard. I'm afraid he began to drink too heavily and then he had a slight stroke. I live in a house far too large for me so I induced him to come in with me." He smiled. "We were neither of us very quarrelsome people and we fitted in admirably. He used to do the housework in return for spending-money."

"But no more acting?"

"Oh, no," he said. "His heart wasn't too good and he'd lost all his connections." He gave the same kindly smile. "I rather think that Monty was what the modern generation calls a ham actor. He was of a byegone school. His idols were people like Sir Henry Irving, and Lewis Waller and Tree. And, of course, Sir John Grange. He was always talking about Sir John. I believe the very last work he did was with Sir John."

"Most interesting," Wharton said. "And can you throw any light on what happened last night?"

"It's the other way about," Crewe said. "I was hoping you could tell me something to explain the queer happenings of the last few days. You see, Monty didn't often go to the West End but a week or more ago he did spend an afternoon there and when he came in that evening he was utterly changed. I'd even say he was transfigured. The annoying thing was he wouldn't tell me a thing, only that very shortly he was going to repay me for all I was sup-

posed to have done for him. After that he went out every morning, even on the Sunday. Once he didn't get home till eleven o'clock, and he still wouldn't tell me a thing. All he'd say was that he had a surprise in store, and that I wouldn't have long to wait."

"Tantalizing," Wharton said. "And you weren't able to make a guess?"

"Guess, yes," he said. "I thought it could only be that he'd got a part in some new play, but when I put it to him he said his lips were sealed. That was his exact phrase. 'My lips are sealed.' "

That was all he could tell us. When he'd left us Wharton told me sententiously that there was a man you could respect. Then he gave one of his grunts.

"If what he guessed was true, then there's going to be a lot of digging to be done. It means seeing every agent and every show in town."

That was how it looked. But even if we did unearth the part he'd hoped to get, we still couldn't see how it could tie in with his murder. Possession of that wallet tied him in with the Ritz-Plaza murder and yet what possible connection could there be between a man like Furloe and a young Indian maharajah? If Furloe had been Turban, where did he do his changing? And what was he doing at half-past ten on a foggy night in Mansfield Street instead of being on his way home to Pimlico?

"I know this is no business of mine, George," I said, "but just for my own satisfaction I'd like to try a short cut. It's a thousand to one chance but might Sir John Grange have been the one who was finding Furloe a job? They were both old-timers and Sir John was Furloe's hero."

George shrugged his shoulders which meant that I was perfectly at liberty to make a fool of myself. However, I looked up the telephone number of the Arlington Square address and rang it. There was no reply. When I looked up the theater column in a newspaper I knew why.

Two large cinemas—The Majestic and the Paliceum—were reverting for a short Christmas season to music-hall. One of the star turns was the great Sir John himself in a fifteen-minute version of Scrooge's Christmas Eve. I managed to get hold of Tom Holberg, the theatrical agent, at his private address and he told me all about it. Sir John was being paid £2,000 a week for the four-week period. And he was earning it. Two shows at each theater each night: at the Paliceum from 7:00 to 7:15 and the Majestic from 7:35 till 7:50. After

that came a longish interval in order that the great man might rest and eat his dinner in peace, for the times of the second performances were 9:00 to 9:15 and 9:40 to 9:55.

When I'd left Wharton I'd told him I'd give Sir John a ring in the morning. I changed my mind. I'm no tuft-hunter but I did think I'd like to seize the chance of talking to someone who was practically a legend, so towards noon I drove to Arlington Square. Sir John's was one of the smaller houses and I had to pull up just short of it because a taxi was at the door. As I tightened my hand-brake a woman came out and Sir John with her. I spotted her at once: it was his younger daughter Joy, the famous diseuse. I was so close to that taxi that I could see she had been crying. She kissed her father and he held her for a moment, his hand gently patting her back.

The taxi moved off. Sir John went into the house. I gave him a couple of minutes, then rang. It was he who opened the door. I raised my hat respectfully and showed him the warrant card I'm always forgetting to return. He looked bewildered.

"Scotland Yard?" he said in that full, rotund bass of his. "I fear you have me at a loss."

I said I wouldn't keep him a minute. His man was out, he said, and showed me into a Victorian survival—a drawing room cluttered with furniture, bric-a-brac and photographs, with his own portrait by Orpen over the mantelpiece. I explained about Furloe. He smiled benignly.

"Of course," he said. "I remember the man well. One like myself of a fast vanishing school. And found dead in the street, you say." The shake of the head was like a requiem. "Still, it comes to all of us. Some years since I saw him last. Did I gather that he'd left the stage?"

I told him what I knew, with no mention of atropine. A minute or two later I left with two stall tickets for the Paliceum. The graciousness with which he gave them to me and the large affability with which he shook me by the hand were overwhelming. To come out of the door to the open square was like leaving a lost world.

I went alone to that show as I'll explain in a moment. I can't say I enjoyed Sir John's act. For one thing I'd seen a good many Scrooges and familiarity can pall. And there was too much crammed into that quarter of an hour. Had the flamboyant gestures and the straining at horror been spread over twice the time, the act—tour de force though it was—would have been more smooth and convincing. But the

audience loved it. They loved the bogus, old-world dignity as the great man took his final curtain.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I am, as always, your humble, grateful and"—a deprecatory smile and a bow—"your most obedient servant."

My wife, as I've said, hadn't been able to go to that show and because of a specially summoned meeting at the hospital. She was quite excited about it when she came home. In hospitals there are still all kinds of amenities not provided by the Welfare State and someone had sent anonymously a superb, two-stone cross-over diamond ring to be sold on the hospital's behalf. It was worth, she said, about twelve hundred pounds and I rather gathered that for quite a time she'd be imagining that ring on her own finger. It was way out beyond my financial capacity.

However, she didn't mention it at breakfast the next morning. I dropped in on George to give him my news. Things were going slowly he said. All everyone was doing was digging and hoping.

"By the way," I said, "how did Malam get here? Did he fly or come by boat?"

"By boat—the *Austral Star* from Bombay," he said. "It called there on its way from Australia. About a fortnight ago. Here's the passenger list."

I had a perfunctory look at it. It was a pretty long list and I was just handing it back when something caught my eye. Among the passengers had been Sir John's two daughters—Helen and Joy Grange.

"A lot of coincidences, aren't there, George?" I said. "Malam on that boat, and those two actresses. Furloe admired Sir John and he had Malam's wallet in his pocket. Anything in it do you think?"

He looked at me as if I'd taken a sudden leave of my senses: then he began dotting i's and crossing t's. Hadn't I discovered for myself that Sir John hadn't seen Furloe for years? What connection could there be between an actor of Sir John's standing and Malam? And if I should happen to have any queer ideas, might he remind me that Malam had been killed at a quarter to ten, at which time Sir John was on the stage of the Majestic.

I accepted the reminder and the covert rebuke with a specious humility. Wharton's little homily didn't change the fact that I'd never had any great use for coincidences. Like a lot of things nowadays, they can be man-made.

That was why, entirely on my own responsibility and for my private satisfaction, I went

to see Tom Holberg. As it turned out he was personally interested in the Grange sisters. As their agent he had arranged that tour of Australia and New Zealand. Joy, as a diseuse, was almost in the Ruth Draper class: Helen was an equally famous classical dancer, and the two, with Kolinski the concert pianist, completed the party. The tour, Tom said, had been a colossal success: so much so that he had been able to arrange on magnificent terms a tour of the States and Canada. But the sisters were refusing to sign the contracts.

"Why not?" I said. "Have they made other plans?"

Tom raised indignant hands to heaven. He'd cabled the terms of the American contract to Australia before the party left and they'd been accepted. And yet, as soon as the sisters reached home, they refused to sign.

"Women!" he said. "They drive you crazy. And now they're not even speaking to each other. I've seen them separately but if I could get them together I might make them see sense, but they won't come. If I even knew what the quarrel's about I might smooth things over but all it is now is talking to a brick wall. Even Kolinski knows nothing. All he knows is that on the boat everything was normal till they were nearly home, and then all at once, just like that, they weren't even speaking to one another. They wouldn't even eat at the same table!"

"Could I see some photographs?"

He produced dozens of them. Helen, the elder sister, was thirty-two, and Joy thirty. Both were extremely beautiful women as I remarked to Tom.

"You don't think the quarrel's over some man or other?"

Tom made a helpless gesture with his palms. What had love to do with business? And he'd heard nothing about a man. Helen's husband had been killed late in the war and she'd never even hinted at remarrying. Joy had divorced her husband three years ago and had said she was through with marrying. So that was that. I tried to cheer Tom up by asking him to lunch with me at my club but he said nowadays he had no appetite.

Altogether I thought it a wasted visit. There was no connection between the Grange sisters and Malam. That either should have fallen in love with with him was preposterous, and I made up my mind never to let slip to Wharton or Clarty that I'd been the victim of my own ideas. After what was to happen an hour or so later, there was even more reason to keep my folly to myself.

It was just after two o'clock

and I was just about to leave the club when a steward told me I was wanted on the telephone. It was Tom Holberg. He wasn't the same man I'd listened to a couple of hours before. Even his voice was all smiles.

"Everything's okay!" he told me. "I thought you'd like to know. Those two we were talking about are coming in together this afternoon to sign the contract! Me, I wish I'd eaten that lunch."

The days went by. Wharton and Clarty, I gathered, were digging and digging, and getting nowhere. It was no skin off my nose, as they say. I had my own troubles at the Broad Street Detective Agency where Norris, my manager, was trying to clear things up before Christmas. But that didn't mean that I did no thinking of my own about those two murders. Any sort of unsolved problem, even if it's only a cross-word clue, will nag at me, and what was nagging most of all was that with the passing of every day, the murderer of that poor devil Furloe was more and more at his ease. Maybe I was biased and unreasonable, but it seemed to me that only two people were caring a hoot for Furloe—myself, perhaps, and the man who had taken him into his own house, set him on his feet again, and then at last had buried him.

That was why one afternoon after a quick lunch at my club, I thought I'd have a look at Mansfield Street. I had only a vague idea where it was but when I found it I was amazed to discover that it led off from Arlington Square! So there was yet another coincidence. Sir John hadn't seen Furloe for years and yet Furloe had somehow contrived to die within about three hundred yards of his house. And then one morning four days before Christmas I happened to see that the *Austral Star* was due at Tilbury. I rang the company's head office. She'd been on a short trip to Bombay, and was already berthed.

I couldn't get down to Tilbury till the early afternoon. The chief steward looked up his records and said the man I wanted was named Barley. Barley and I had a talk in one of the then-empty cabins. He made no bones about showing me the first-class cabins—all in his charge—that had been occupied by the people about whom I wanted information. Helen Grange had been one cabin from Malam, and her sister two cabins on.

But when I started ferreting into the quarrel between the sisters, he closed. I told him I could have him taken to the Yard: I assured him that anything said would be in the strictest confidence, and finally

I threw in a fiver as make-weight. The fiver turned the scale.

"If one word of this gets out, sir, I lose my job," he said. "But it was like this. I'll give it to you straight."

Two nights before berthing there had been a gala concert, thanks largely to the presence on board of celebrities like Helen and Joy Grange and Kolinski. After the show Barley had been in the linen room adjoining Malam's cabin and, as his door had been ajar, he had seen Helen Grange go by with Malam. They went into his cabin.

"Just a moment," I said. "He was supposed to be incognito but did you know who he was?"

He smiled. He said it was one of those open secrets. At any rate he soon heard raised voices so he put his ear to the partition.

"You wouldn't think a lady like her could use such language, sir, but she called him everything she could lay her tongue to—a dirty swine and I don't know what. I heard a sort of crack like as if she'd slapped his face and the next thing was the door slammed."

"And then?"

"Well, I stayed put, sir, and then a bit later there was a ring from His Nibs's cabin. There was some jewelry spread out on the table. I remember that because I thought it ought to be in the ship's safe. But what he gave me was a tiny little parcel and I was to give it to Miss Joy Grange. He was nice as ninepence. You wouldn't have thought he'd be looking so pleased after that slap in the face."

I gave him the fiver. I put the big bonus question. Did he ever guess what was in that parcel?

"Guess?" he said. "I can do better than that, sir. She was first down to breakfast the next morning and you ought to've seen the diamond ring she had on her finger!"

So I had the information. I had far more than I'd hoped to get, and I wondered what I could do with it. The enquiries I'd made were purely personal ones and I couldn't very well go to Wharton or Clarty and say that I'd been pushing an itching nose into something that didn't concern me. It'd have been the essence of conceit; like saying that while they'd been busy over routine I'd had the brainwaves. So I slept over it and in the morning I saw a way out. I rang George and asked if he and Clarty could spare me a minute or two.

"This is all very private at the moment," I told them, "but I knew neither of you would mind if I kept my private ear to the ground. I think I've

found a close connection between Sir John Grange and Malam."

I told them, still highly confidentially, about that contract, and the sisters' quarrel, and how the contract had now been signed. If they made their own enquiries on the *Austral Star* to confirm what I'd happened to pick up, then they'd have the beginnings of a case.

"The late Malam was even nastier than you thought," I said to Clarty. "He asked Helen Grange to go to his cabin to see his collection of jewels, then he offered her a diamond *ring*—on the usual conditions. She slapped his face and told him just what he was. You can guess how that made him feel—till he thought of a magnificent revenge. He sent *the same* ring to Joy with a note enclosed saying it was a tribute to her superb performance of that evening. Joy wore that ring at breakfast the next morning. Helen saw it. There's no need to ask what she thought or why there was a quarrel. The important thing is that when they were home Helen must have confided in her father. Joy was on her high horse and refused to explain, even to him, so he took things into his own hands. That's not only logical: you can take it from me that it's sheer hard fact."

Clarty said it was just the godsend he'd hoped for. The whole course of his enquiry would be switched forthwith.

"Naturally you've taken it into consideration long ago," I said, "but tie it all in with the fact that Mansfield Street is only a stone's throw from Arlington Square. And that once Malam was dead, Joy started explaining. And I've also been thinking about Sir John's man. I wouldn't be surprised if he was given a week's holiday before Malam's death."

So that was that. Clarty rang me at the Agency a day or two later to say that everything was going nicely and that a certain party was likely to be asked some awkward questions. The next day—it was Christmas Eve—I left the office late. I bought an evening paper but didn't look at it till I was safely on the bus. Then my eyes popped.

DEATH OF SIR JOHN GRANGE
Famous Actor Found Dead

There wasn't much more information except that he'd been found at his house, a gun by his side. I got off that bus at Charing Cross and managed to hop another to the Embankment. Wharton was out but I found Clarty in his room. I put those headlines under his nose and asked what had happened.

"Probably the best thing that could have happened," he said.

"We had everything tied up so we rang him and asked if he'd be so good as to come here and explain a few things. He did an indignation act and asked what things, so we gave him a hint or two. He virtually told us we were mad and we could go to hell. We said if he wasn't here in an hour he'd be fetched. And when we did go there we were just too late."

There are plenty of Cases that never appear on the official lists as cleared up, and for the simple reason that, while the police know the identity of a murderer, certain interests make it inexpedient to make everything public. This, I guessed, would be such a Case. Now that the principals were all dead, there was no need to smear in any way the reputation of the Grange sisters. But when Clarty told me the official interpretation of the Case, I could hardly believe my ears.

"Perfectly obvious once we had those hints you dropped us," he said. "Grange hired Furloe to kill Malam. It's as simple as that."

What could I say? It was no business of mine. If they wanted it that way—well, they could have it for all of me. No use protesting that Furloe couldn't possibly have done the Malam killing. The timings alone proved it. And what about that word *scoundrel* on the blotter? But, as I said, it was no concern of mine. Maybe Clarty was shutting his eyes because of pressure from higher up. I didn't know. All I could do was congratulate him on winding up the Case, and wish him a Happy Christmas. I didn't even add that in any case he'd be having a warmer one than that poor devil Furloe.

A week after Christmas Tom Holberg rang me. The Grange sisters were off to America in a day or two and were giving a Columbus Party. Invitations had been issued before Sir John's death and the whole thing might have been cancelled but for the show-must-go-on, stiff-upper-lip tradition. I said I'd love to be there. My wife wouldn't go. She hates the gush, gabble and giggle of theatrical parties, so I went alone to the big South Kensington apartment. There were acres to eat and oceans to drink: a deafening hilarity but not more than a couple of people whom I knew. Tom was one of them. By the use of a little tact I got him to disclose that he'd seen a certain diamond ring on Joy's finger. I'd have been prepared to offer a thousand to one that it was the ring that had been given anonymously to the hospital.

There was a little annex where reserves of eatables and drinks were being kept and when Helen happened to go

there, Tom and I managed to wriggle through the crowd. He introduced me as an old and dear friend, then left us to it. It was quiet in there after the hubbub. She was as beautiful as ever, and most gracious. She told me what a loss to the stage had been her father's death. Every cadence and gesture was nicely calculated as she deplored the overwork and the devotion to his craft that had brought on that final and tragic brainstorm.

I was listening. I nodded and agreed, but my thoughts were still my own. I was wondering what she'd say if I told her—or reminded her—that her father was a murderer. Neither of those sisters could be such a fool as to believe that, under the known circumstances, Malam's murder had been marvellously fortuitous. Not that I cared two pins about Malam: it was Furloe of whom I was thinking. And what could I have said to her? And would my face have been slapped if I had said it?

"Your father managed to get into touch with a man called Furloe who'd worked with him and was his own build and whose views on acting were precisely his own. In the strictest secrecy he told Furloe he wanted him as an understudy to ease the strain of those four performances a night. Over and over again the act was rehearsed till Furloe was word and gesture perfect. Furloe saw live performances. He was even taken—with some slight disguise—behind the scenes and then, on a certain night, when the car came to take Sir John to those last two performances, it was Furloe who came out of the door.

"On went the Turban costume and Sir John—the stern Victorian parent—went to his appointment with Malam. Malam didn't expect a disguise and, before he could recover from his surprise, Sir John had him at the point of a gun. He made Malam write a full confession. When Malam handed him that confession, he slipped the gun back into his pocket, and it was then that Malam went for his own gun.

"It's ten minutes' walk from that hotel to Arlington Square. Furloe was driven home later and found awaiting him the man he'd left. While he was changing from the Scrooge costume he'd be talking about the evening's success and how no one had suspected.

" 'You're looking tired, my dear fellow. Here's a stiff whiskey. Drink it straight down. It'll do you good.'

"Furloe drank. In his excited state and with that bad heart of his, the poison soon worked.

" 'My dear fellow, you're looking ill. Bed's the place for you. We'll get a taxi.'

"And so out, and on together in the fog till Furloe could walk no further. A lamppost to cling to, and that was all."

That was the kind of thing I might have said but of course I didn't say it. Travers, public school and Cambridge, who also knew the stiff-upper-lip and strong-silent-man routines and what befits the perfect gentleman. And then suddenly something of that skin was sloughing off. If only as a kind of retribution for Furloe there was something I had to say. I had to leave Helen Grange with that something which would disturb and maybe frighten for the rest of her days. And she gave me the chance when she mentioned that Australian tour.

"By the way, didn't the late Maharajah of Serindapor join your boat at Bombay?"

Her face hardened—just for a moment.

"Yes, I believe he did."

"Not a nice person," I said. "You thought so yourself, didn't you?"

There was a fright in the stare.

"I'm afraid I don't understand you."

"Just a little secret between ourselves," I said suavely. "I was thinking of that night of the gala performance on the boat and what happened when you went to his cabin to see his collection of jewels."

The hand that held her glass was suddenly shaking. She stood motionless for a moment and then all at once she was opening the door. She left me as if she'd suddenly discovered I was a leper—or the recording angel.

I didn't know. I only knew I'd had enough of that apartment, and I made my way through the crowd and the noise and the haze of tobacco smoke to the strange quiet of that Kensington backwater and the clean, frosty air of a January night.

CONFESSION

On his arrest, Marcel confessed to having killed his wife some days earlier, after a quarrel during which he'd accused her of betraying him. . . .

"I took her by the throat, and when I let go she fell down and didn't move again. Distracted, I took the body by the arms and threw it, dressed as it was, into the furnace through the open door."

He denied premeditation. He'd lighted the furnace, not to get rid of the body, but to dry some repairs in the basement.

"When I looked into the furnace the next morning," he continued, "I noticed nothing abnormal, and I took nothing away from the ashes that were there."

for the good of the city

by . . . Arthur Somers Roche

"A live man could turn a million here in twelve months, Captain."

"More than that, maybe."

"How-do, *Inspector?*"

Police Captain Michael Tressiger looked up from his plate of "ham-and." His ears, long attuned to subtleties of tone as well as of word, caught the slight emphasis on the title. Faint wrinkles showed on his lower eye-lids, as they drew up, narrowing his glance. Only a fraction of a second elapsed before he replied, but that was long enough for him to catalogue the speaker as follows: "Too jolly; eyes don't fit the rest of his face; fine indoor tan; electric lights did it; spends big money on his manicure; but why are the nails on his little fingers pared to the quick? 'Gam.' "

The last word is an abbreviation; Captain Tressiger meant that the gentleman who had accosted him with a title not his made his living by serving the goddess of chance. A professional gambler. Perhaps one errs in coupling the fickle godess's name with the vocation mentioned. Pared fingernails mean that the delicate nerves of the

Arthur Somers Roche was a name to conjure with in the 20's, as some of you must have heard. In an era where dash and superficial glitter was part of the writer's craft, Roche was unique in his blend of realism with adventurous romanticism of the decade. FOR THE GOOD OF THE CITY *is a piece of Americana, dating back to those days when Tammany Hall was a reality—not a memory.*

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finger tips will telegraph to the brain any slight inequality in the edges of the cards. Chance has nothing to do with the affairs of gentry such as he who dropped smilingly into the chair across the table from the police officer.

Aloud the captain said, politely, "Afraid you've made a mistake, sir."

He smiled ingratiatingly as he spoke. The wrinkles disappeared from beneath his eyes; the eyes themselves were round and simple now; he looked hopeful, ingratiating, very much like a Newfoundland puppy that wants to make friends. One almost expected him to wag his tail.

The smartly-groomed stranger frowned; he pursed his lips.

"I never forget faces—or names," he said. "I met you at the police lieutenant's banquet. Aren't you Inspector Michael Tressiger?"

"I wish I was," replied Tressiger with a grin. "I'm *Captain* Michael Tressiger."

The stranger made a grimace.

"The laugh's on me. But I'm right, at that. I didn't forget your name or face. Just the title. But—maybe I'm not so far wrong about that. It's a short step from a captaincy to the other, eh?"

"If your legs are long," grinned Tressiger.

"Or if you have plenty of push—or pull," amended the other. "My name's Brennan, Captain. You've forgotten me?"

"Well, now, if you'll excuse me," said Tressiger, embarrassedly, "I meet so many— It was the lieutenant's banquet, you say? Well, Mr. Brennan, that was a big night, you know, and I was a guest and treated like one, so—" He broke off, grinning sheepishly.

It was excellent acting. As a matter of fact, Tressiger had never drunk a drop of liquor in his life. Equally as a matter of fact, there was not a single person in the world who knew that he was a "teetotaller." Had they been asked, his friends would have admitted that they had never seen him take a drink, but still they would have thought that he occasionally took one. The reason was simple; Tressiger was always "off the stuff" today. His manner and words always indicated that yesterday it had been different and tomorrow it would be different. To be a total abstainer was a very good thing in Michael Tressiger's profession. To be *known* as a total abstainer—that was another thing. Sometimes a captain of detectives likes to pretend slight or great intoxication. A "teetotaller" could not get away with such a play. Absolutely colorless, no high lights anywhere, in person, in manner,

or in mode of living—that was to be an efficient detective, according to the theories of Captain Tressiger, and he lived according to his theories.

"Not a word," said Mr. Brennan, with a roguish wink. "Banquets don't count. Especially in a town as dull as this has got to be."

"Is it?" queried Tressiger, innocently.

"You know it," asserted Brennan. "Dull as ditchwater, yet with the opportunities and the material—" He smacked his lips. "A live man could turn a million here in twelve months, Captain."

"More than that, maybe," assented Tressiger, lamblike of countenance.

"If he were let alone," supplemented Brennan.

"Who'd disturb him?"

Brennan shrugged his shoulders. "Like arithmetic, Captain?"

How Tressiger managed to impart a shine to his eyes at this moment, only he himself could explain. But they did shine, with greed.

"Ever try to figure ten percent of a million?" asked Brennan.

"I could figure fifteen easier," said Tressiger.

"Twelve and a half," said Brennan.

"I could do that," admitted Tressiger.

For a good twenty seconds the keen eyes of the gambler held those of Tressiger. But all that Brennan saw was stupid greed, cheap cunning, a weak-willed man's dishonesty. He looked satisfied when he released Tressiger's eyes.

"We'll do business," he said shortly. "Any suggestions?"

"Cash. No checks," said Tressiger, eagerly. He caught himself. "But I'm only a captain. I haven't got control of—"

"You should worry, *Inspector!*" laughed Brennan. He looked around the dingy restaurant. "We don't need bother about details. You said it in one word, 'Cash.' Besides, the newspaper boys drop in here. Good afternoon, Inspector."

He nodded, smiled, arose, and walked briskly from the place.

". . . the facts given in this story will doubtless be immediately denied by both the Commissioner of Police and the Mayor. Nevertheless the Star *obtained them from a source that has hitherto proved accurate and honest, and this paper reiterates that it is planned that within the next two weeks Inspector Michael Tressiger will ask and be granted leave of absence for a fortnight or a month. While on his vacation he will become ill and obtain an extension of leave. His illness will*

terminate in a nervous breakdown; on his return to duty after six or eight months he will find that the work of the detective bureau has been so ably carried on by his successor, present Captain Grayson, that, in justice to the efficiency of the department, it will be inadvisable to remove Grayson. Tressiger will be out of the detective bureau.

"This premature exposure may cause to be altered some of the above details. Nevertheless, the result will be the same. For reasons best known to the powers that be, Inspector Tressiger is to be removed from the head of the detective department. And if he doesn't retire gracefully means will be found to force his retirement."

For the third time Tressiger read the article, mumbling the last paragraphs aloud, after the fashion of those whose early education has been neglected and who have had to make up deficiencies late in life.

Inspector Tressiger had been working hard these past four weeks. Captain of detectives though he had been for three years, until a month ago when promoted to the head of the bureau, being chief, he had learned, is a mighty different thing from being subordinate. A million details, more or less, had to be learned by an inspector who ruled the detective bureau. Of course, it was easier than if he had not served so long in the branch of the Force, but Tressiger was a mighty methodical man. Everything that the head of the bureau should or could know, Tressiger wanted to know. Hence, his days and his nights had been filled with labors.

Today he had planned to take off, the first little vacation in the month. Carpet slippers were on his feet; a frayed but warm old bathrobe enveloped his stocky form; a pile of magazines, several much-used pipes, and a jar of tobacco were on a table in the room which he called his "office," and which another man might have termed his study. He looked longingly from the breakfast where he read the *Star* to the open door of the office. Then he sighed, left the room and entered his bedroom, where he arrayed himself in a quiet business suit and cloth hat. From the inner coat pocket of the uniform hanging in a closet he drew a little notebook. He found there the address of Tom Griffith, Headquarters man of the *Star*.

With a word to the motherly old Irish-woman who was his housekeeper, he left the little flat where he had planned to spend a day of rest, and set forth for the neighborhood of Washington Square.

They were lax in certain things in the lodging house where Tom Griffith abode. The maid who answered Tressiger's ring told him the location of Griffith's room and said to go right up without any formality. Tressiger did so. He tried the knob of the reporter's door, found that it was not locked and entered with a softness of tread that was amazing considering his bulkiness.

By the window, in a cot-bed, Griffith lay slumbering. Tressiger did not disturb him until he had swept the bedroom with observing eyes. He noted everything, especially a round blue article on the bureau. He smiled a trifle at sight of this. Then he walked to the bed and shook the sleeper into wakefulness.

Griffith sat up, grumbling. But, as his eyes cleared and he recognized his caller, Tressiger noted that the reporter's muscles went tense for a fraction of a second. Then Griffith grinned, stretched his arms above his head, yawned, and frankly and pleasantly cursed his visitor.

"Don't you know a reporter wants his rest on the day after his day off?" he asked. "You big heartless bull, whaddaya-mean, ye lost your dog?"

"It's my goat, Tom," said Tressiger, genially. "Had to find him as soon as possible. Thought you and I were little pals together, Tom?"

"Huh? I haven't stolen any candy out of your desk, Mike."

"No, it was somebody else's desk. Wake up, Tom! Give it to me straight. Why did you write that yarn about me going to get the gate? And where did you get it?"

"What yarn?"

"In this morning's *Star,* of course."

Griffith lifted his pajama-ed legs to the floor; his feet groped for slippers. He put his hands to his head.

"An awful night, Mike," he groaned. "Before you use the third degree let me get a little jolt."

Tressiger breathed deeply. "Go to it, Tom," he said genially.

The reporter shuffled across the room to a closet. There he got a flask of whiskey and a tumbler. He poured himself a small drink and downed it. He turned, smacking his lips.

"A hair of the dog," he grinned. "Now I can listen to the riddle. What's all this about a story in the *Star?"*

Tressiger silently handed him the newspaper. Griffith read it carefully. He handed it back. "Tough luck if they do intend to put the rollers under you, Mike," he said sympathetically. "But—yesterday was my day off."

"Who relieves you? Thought Sunday was your loafing day?"

"Was, until this week. Relieves me? Nobody; we take a chance on the City News looking after us. If anything breaks we shoot a man over to Headquarters."

"Then you couldn't tell who wrote this?"

"Oh, well, now, that's different," hedged Griffith. "I could make a pretty close guess, but—newspapermen don't do that sort of thing, Mike. You ought to know that. Professional secrecy—all that sort of stuff. I couldn't tell you his name. But what's worrying you? If a cop was transferred every time the papers said so—"

"It sounded like whoever wrote it had the inside dope," interrupted Tressiger. "And your paper must have thought the 'info' was right from the feed box, to print it. I've done you several good turns."

"You sure have, Mike," assented the reporter. "But if I asked you to tell me the contents of a secret order the Commish handed you, what then?"

"Yup. I suppose it's the same idea," grunted Tressiger.

He picked up his hat from the bureau where he had deposited it on entering the room. Considering the stubbiness of his fingers, it must have taken many, many weary hours of practice for him to master the sleight of hand whereby he picked up the blue piece of celluloid while apparently merely reaching for his hat. But the reporter's eyes were very keen and Tressiger did not dare to sweep the chip into the hat. It had to be picked up. And Griffith did not notice.

"Sorry, Mike. Surprised you should worry about a pipe-dream in the paper, though," said Griffith.

"Well, you couldn't exactly call it worrying," said Tressiger. "I just wanted to know, Tom. Well, hop into the hay again. Sorry to disturb you. Better chop the rum, son. Bad game. S'long."

And he walked slowly from the room, closing the door gently behind him. His walk was heavy as he descended the stairs, but once in the street, while it still looked heavy, it was in reality as light as a dancer's tread. And it was as certain as the march of a file of soldiers; Tressiger knew exactly where he was going.

Ex-Alderman Torney, Democratic leader of the —nth District, and by virtue of the office and various other considerations one of the little group that ruled the "Hall," and thus directed the destinies of the City, was in the private office from where he ran a chain of saloons, dictated the policy of a trust company, and planned various incursions into the field of

realty investment. Smoothly plump, a little too fashionably attired, with a diamond in his tie that was perfect in all save good taste, he lounged in a swivel chair, his patent-leathered feet on his desk.

He waved a fleshy hand toward an open box of cigars. "Help yourself, Inspector," he said, "they ain't the kind I give to my constituents."

Tressiger smiled appreciatively at the mild jest. "Much obliged, Alderman," he said. He selected a cigar, bit off the end, and lighted it. He puffed at it nervously, sitting on the extreme edge of the chair to which Torney had motioned him.

"Excuse me, Alderman," he said, hesitatingly, "but would you mind telling me where you was last night?"

Mr. Torney stared at the inspector. Policemen, no matter what their rank, were not in the habit of asking the politician his whereabouts at any given time. Mr. Torney, though he rarely advertised the fact, though, indeed, he denied it in the public prints as regularly as any reform committee made the assertion, made or broke policemen as the whim seized him. To be questioned by one of them— He pursed his fleshy lips and his eyes hardened.

"You ain't tryin' to run a third degree on me in my own office, are you, Inspector?" he demanded.

His manner seemed to say that if such were the case he would have Inspector Tressiger degraded before nightfall.

Tressiger shifted his position uneasily. "Excuse me again, Mr. Torney," he pleaded humbly, "but Benny the Rat has squealed and—"

"Eh? Benny the— Squealed!" With an effort the ex-alderman banished the indignant amazement from his tone. "I don't get you," he said more calmly. "What's Benny the—what'd you call him? The Rat? Well, what's his squealing got to do with me? Seems to me that you're travelin' a short road to a long finish, Inspector Tressiger."

"I was afraid you might take it like that," said Tressiger, meekly. "And I hesitated about seein' you at all. And then I figured that Benny's lawyer would get to the newspaper boys, and there'd be a big hoorah, when if I could get just a word or so out of you I'd be able to show the lawyer that Benny was up against it anyway you look at it, and the best thing he could do is to take a plea, and not try to throw mud. I didn't mean to annoy you, Alderman. It was just to prevent any mud being slung at you."

Torney breathed deeply. "Well, that's more like sense, Inspector," he said, encourag-

ingly. "But what's where I was last night got to do with Benny the Rat?"

"Well, you see, we took him in about one this morning. Gangster job over on the East Side. Benny lost his nerve and offered to give up everything he knew if we'd turn him loose. 'Course, him being nailed with a gat smoking in his hand we couldn't do anything like that. Assault with intent to kill is too serious a matter. But we offered to make it plain assault if he had any good news for the department. Well, he come through with a long story about you being behind him in election frauds last fall. Said he could prove you supplied him with money for repeaters and that you hired him to put the Fusion poll workers in the hospital. If I didn't know *you,* Alderman, the yarn woulda listened good. And when, to sorter clinch his story—he was pretty scared, being caught with the goods, you know—he said that he'd been with you up to midnight last night, making plans to do some colonizing for the special election to fill Congressman Greening's seat—well, I figured here was an easy way to prove him a liar. If he lied in one thing he lied in all of them. 'Course, I know he lied all the way, but the papers and the reformers—you know, Alderman.

"Well, then, if Benny *wasn't* with you last night—he'd drop his story for good and all. I'd give him an earful that if he sprung stuff like that in court he'd maybe get life. So you see how it is I come up to see you. Charges, even if they're lies, ain't pleasant, with a special election coming on."

Torney beamed graciously upon the inspector. "You've done well, Inspector Tressiger," he said. "Sorry I got hot a minute ago. Well, I'll prove to you what a liar this Benny the Rat is. Here's the telephone book. Get my number. Ask my wife where I was last night. Yes, go ahead," he added, as Tressiger seemed to hesitate with embarrassment. "God knows I got nothing to hide. And as you say, better quench it at the start than let it grow to a blaze. Repeater charges are bad for the party. And as you say, if this Benny person knows you know he lies, and that lies'll make his case harder for him— I was sick in bed with indigestion all last evening. Went to bed at seven and stayed there till this morning. Now, then, ask my wife where I was. Tell her you're Sam Wolfenstein. Say you had a date with me for last night. Then she'll answer you. Or give her any name at all. See?"

Tressiger saw. He got Torney's wife on the telephone, spoke with her a moment, corroborated her husband's state-

ment, and then turned to the politician with an air of righteous indignation.

"I told Benny the Rat I'd reduce the charge if he had any straight information," he said, heavily. " 'Course, when I said that I didn't dream he was going to make any crazy charges against a man like you, Alderman. When he made 'em, of course I had to take the quickest way to disprove 'em. A liar in part, a liar all through. Well, he's made a monkey outa me, and made me offend you. He'll pay."

"Oh, I wouldn't feel that way, Inspector," said Torney. "I suppose the poor guy was desperate, and maybe filled up with hop. Jail ain't a pleasant prospect. And, even, if he did lie about me—well, I don't bear malice. Besides, if you get the limit for him he'll talk anyway, won't he? Nothing to it, but—with a special election coming on we got to think of the party, eh, Inspector? Who did this Benny person bump off, anyway?"

"Some Armenian. No account. Just wounded him; no killing."

"H'm. No account, eh? No friends, eh? Nobody to raise a row. H'm. And maybe this Armenian only got what was comin' to him, at that."

"Benny says it was self-defense," admitted Tressiger.

"Maybe the man tells the truth," said Torney. "And a scandal in the party—the other side would just hop to it, even if it was a pack of lies. Suppose, Inspector, all things considered, that you let this Benny person go? It isn't in the papers, eh?"

"No," said Tressiger.

"Then suppose you let him go. For the sake of the party."

"Well, if you hadn't proved him such an awful liar, right off the bat, I don't know as I could do that, even for you, Alderman," said Tressiger, slowly, "but under the circumstances—just as you say, Alderman."

"Thanks," said the great man, genially. "You got the right idea about your job, Inspector. And—er—send this Benny person to me."

"Yes, sir," said Tressiger.

Once outside Torney's office, he permitted himself the luxury of a grin. Then with the same light, certain step he set out on a tour of the East Side. It took him three hours to locate Benny the Rat, but only three minutes to do business with that notorious gangster.

"Benny," he said, briskly, "there's a dozen things I could slap you into a cell for. You know it, eh?"

"You ain't got a bit of evidence on me for anything," declared the gangster.

"I could frame it," said Tressiger.

"What's the matter?" whined Benny.

"Nothing—much. I just want you to leave town—*leave* it—flat—for two weeks. Here's a hundred expense money. You take the first train outa the Grand Central, for anywhere. If you're seen in town inside two weeks I'll frame you. Understand?"

"No," said Benny, "but I'm leavin' town."

Simeon Cranston was known as the "aristocrat of the Hall." Born to high social position, only a very few knew when old Jabez Cranston died he had left behind him little but the memory of a sunny disposition. All of the fortune that John, the grandfather, had left, Jabez the son had dissipated, leaving Simeon the grandson nothing but the family name and place. "Dissipated," perhaps, is not the exact word, too suggestive as it is of fast living. Jabez Cranston had lived, everything considered, in most exemplary fashion. He had not drunk or gambled to excess. But he had lived beyond his income, necessitating each year a larger dip into the principal that John had amassed. So, simultaneously, Simeon attained orphanhood and his majority, and the knowledge that he had not a penny to bless himself with. Gone was his dream of entering the diplomatic service, of advancing himself by means of the famous Cranston manner and the Cranston wealth, until at last he should attain an ambassadorial post. He was confronted with the stern necessity of earning a living.

Simeon took stock of himself and his prospects. Friends of his father there doubtless were who would give him a start in their offices. But, with his father dead, how long would such kindly interest continue? Not a minute after young Simeon gave signs of being a business failure. Knowing himself, knowing his hatred for anything that faintly resembled work, young Simeon shuddered. The Cranston manner, justly famed though it was, and transmitted without diminution from Jabez to Simeon, was mighty poor capital wherewith to embark in a commercial career. Simeon looked around.

It was the era of the climber. From the west was pouring into the metropolis the mining and cattle contingent, flushed with wealth, anxious to spend, with their women more anxious to spend in the right quarter, to enter "Society." These would pay richly for the entree into the circle to which Simeon had been born. Simeon seriously considered adopting the career of a social steerer. Then he looked about him; he remembered the fates of several social

steerers. They had "got by" for a while, had flourished exceedingly, and then—their set had dropped them, and now they eked out too precarious existences introducing climbers to other climbers. Soon this sort of thing would be denied. True, they were not Cranstons, with the Cranston manner and the Cranston footing, but— Well, money was dominating society more and more. Cranston manners and Cranston position would not last many more years without money; without much more money than could be wrung from the climbers. Simeon looked farther. This time his eye alighted upon Big Mike Allardyce, the leader of the "Hall."

Simeon met Allardyce when the former was escorting a group of ladies on a sight-seeing trip which had wound up at the "Hall." Allardyce, at the time a typical roughneck, had noticed the group, had been attracted by the ladies, had introduced himself, had volunteered to be their guide, had been accepted and, a new type, had amused the party tremendously. So much so that Simeon invited the boss to be his guest at a dinner-party the following week.

So had begun Allardyce's social career, of which the newspapers had made much, Allardyce, hungry for intercourse with these superior beings, a born toady and snob, for all his money and political power and physical courage, had hinted to Cranston that a mutual friendship might prove mutually profitable. The boss read the money-greed in the young man's face. Other people might not see it there, but Big Mike Allardyce owed his success to his ability to read men. Further, he had his agents look up the Cranston fortune, and they found it nonexistent. There was no crude bargaining; Allardyce merely stated that C. and B. stock was going up. It would be a pleasure to carry ten thousand shares for his friend Cranston. In the same breath he went on to explain that the greatest drawback the Hall had to fight was the fact that the "good people" were against it. If, for instance, he continued, he, Mike Allardyce, were known to mingle with the world of fashion, and if a few of the world of fashion should mingle with the folk of the "Hall"—Well?

Cranston made over thirty thousand on the C. and B. stock deal. Mike Allardyce went to the Mannering fancy ball. Cranston made a hundred and forty thousand on the new reservoir project; Allardyce went for a week-end cruise on the Crichton yacht. At first the world smiled, even guffawed. Then it became accustomed to the sight of the

boss, no longer a roughneck, but toned down in manner and apparel, vouched-for by Simeon Cranston, entering the world of society, which always looking for amusement, and finding it in the clever Irish wit of Allardyce, welcomed him with open arms.

After all, Cranston had become a social steerer, but—he had also become a power in the world of politics and accordingly, of finance. Between the two men grew up a warm friendship. While Allardyce never fully trusted Cranston, still, Cranston gave him what he wanted, and Cranston was too dependent on Allardyce ever to betray the boss. Allardyce admired Cranston because of the latter's suaveness, wit, bonhomie, absence of "side." Cranston liked Allardyce because the latter had made him rich.

For a decade and half this state of affairs continued. Strangely enough, instead of weakening Allardyce's political power, the fact that he traveled with a fashionable set made him stronger in the "Hall." The "Hall" took a vicarious pride in his social career. It was flattering to the "Hall."

Then Big Mike's doctor thumped his diaphragm, listened with a stethoscope to his heart and lungs, took his blood pressure—and Allardyce took a steamer for the Old Country. He never returned.

His friend Cranston, now graying with middle-age, was one of half a dozen with whom the boss left the destinies of the "Hall." In a little while the half dozen split into two groups, of three each, one headed by Cranston, the other led by Jim Torney. Dissension rent their councils. A reform wave swept the city and for eight years the "Hall" was out of power. Then a public dissatisfaction with the reformers setting in, the "Hall" regained its control of the City government.

Lean years had taught the two groups the folly of internal dissension. At least, they outwardly professed disgust at their bickering and publicly drank to reconciliation—and spoils! Privately, however, with the return to power, the two groups revived the old jealousy. They did not dare to fight, but each planned how it would acquire greater power than the other, how it would retain the major portion of the looted profits of the "Hall's" rule.

And all these matters, reduced to their smallest details, passed in review before Inspector Tressiger's mental sight before he made his next move after getting Benny the Rat out of town in order that Torney might not know of the trick that had been played on him. For Tres-

siger was as keen a student of affairs political as might have been found even in the highest councils of the "Hall." Early, at the very outset of his police career, Tressiger had discovered that the policeman who fought the politicians must lose all or gain all. There were no halfway measurer. A policeman, if he fought politicians, must fight *politics*. To defeat one politician and stop there meant to be driven from the force. And not to fight politicians meant to be a crook. But the honest man, if he is wise, does not always attack the first dishonesty he finds. He waits until, by tackling something big, the little things are wiped out with the great. So with Tressiger. And now, after twenty years of patient waiting, of futile inward raging at the things he must see and permit to be, Michael Tressiger was ready to strike the big thing—politics, not mere politicians. Though, of course, to strike the thing he had to strike its practitioners.

It was eight o'clock that night when the inspector, accompanied by two men whose plainclothes could not disguise their police connection, mounted the steps of the Cranston mansion.

To the servant who answered his ring he demanded being shown to the master of the house at once. After some demur he was admitted to the library and in a moment Cranston came to him.

"I'm entertaining some of my friends, Inspector," he said crossly. "What is it?"

Like Torney, Cranston knew the inspector, though neither of them knew him at all well.

"Sorry, Mr. Cranston," said Tressiger, humbly. "There's been some sort of a mistake somewhere, but—well, the plain truth of the matter is this: Alderman Henry Pedderman was secretly indicted by the grand jury today, on charges brought by the Civic League. Indicted for accepting a bribe."

"Well, what about it?" snapped Cranston.

Tressiger shuffled uneasily, and seemed afraid to meet Cranston's eyes.

"Well," he stammered, "the Civic League people accused you of giving the bribe. And Pedderman — well, he confessed."

"Confessed?" Honest amazement was in Cranston's eyes. "Why, I hardly know the man. It's an outrageous lie!"

"It looks like a dirty frame-up to me," assented Tressiger. "Still, orders is orders. There's a warrant for you, Mr. Cranston. You see, Pedderman's story is full of detail that makes it sound O.K. to people who don't really know you. He even claims that money passed from

you to him as recently as last night."

"Last night? That proves what a liar he is. Why last night I was at—"

"Yes?" queried Tressiger, gently.

Cranston laughed and colored slightly. "Well, between friends, Inspector Tressiger, I have a complete alibi for last night. I was at Smilo Brennan's from eight until twelve-thirty."

"Brennan the gambler?"

"Well, let's not be crude in our terms," said Cranston. "I'd not want to have it publicly known. But between us—you'd better not arrest me, Inspector! If Pedderman can be so quickly proven a liar in one thing it stands to reason he will be proved a liar in other things, eh? It will be easy to get hold of Brennan, verify my statement that—"

"Oh, we'll take your word for that end of it, Mr. Cranston," said Tressiger. "In fact, that's all we wanted to know. Mr. Cranston, I arrest you for maintaining a public gambling house, and for bribery. Anything you say will be used against you. Better come along quiet, now."

It was two o'clock in the morning. In the private office of the Commissioner of Police were a group of men, all of them, save Inspector Michael Tressiger, white-faced, strained, angry-looking. There were the Mayor, the Commissioner, District Leader Torney and his lawyer, Abe Grumble, and Simeon Cranston, one of the rulers of the "Hall," and his lawyer, Grenfell Worthington, and Smilo Brennan, the gambler, and his lawyer, Louis Johnson. A lull had come in the midst of threats, expostulations, profanity. During it the Mayor turned to Tressiger.

"You say you've got the evidence, Inspector," he said. "No, wait," he snapped, as the lawyers began to speak, "let's hear the inspector now. Go ahead, Tressiger, tell us what you have."

Tressiger put his hands on his knees and leaned stiffly toward the Mayor. In the monotone of the policeman making a report he addressed the Mayor.

"On April fifth, Your Honor, in Whelan's restaurant, Brennan here accosted me. He addressed me *as* Inspector, and I was then only a captain. Hinted I could be an inspector. Hinted I could get twelve and a half per cent of a million a year if I kept quiet. I told him I liked that sort of figuring. Two weeks later I was made inspector with full charge of the detective bureau. Smilo Brennan opened up four days after that on West Forty-eighth Street, near Fifth Avenue. I got eight hundred a

week later, fourteen hundred the next week, and twelve hundred the week after that. Got it in cash. Still got it. Guess he wasn't doing a million dollars business, but he was doing well, at that. Furthermore, the messenger that brought the money to me stated that Smilo was only going to run one place yet awhile. In the fall he'd open up. I've got that messenger under arrest. He's confessed that Smilo Brennan sent him to me. Also, I got receipts from the Nineteenth National stating that on certain days I deposited certain amounts stating that said amounts were bribes paid to me by Smilo Brennan."

"Why didn't you arrest him after he'd paid the first bribe?" demanded the Mayor.

Tressiger smiled faintly. "Your Honor, I've been on the Force a long time. I wanted to remain a while longer. I knew that the day I got Brennan pinched that day would end me on the Force. Unless I got the men higher up. I coulda turned Brennan down at the go-off. But it struck me here was a chance to really clean this town, to get the men higher up. So I went ahead with him. Well, I did my best to find out who was backing Brennan, but I couldn't learn. It was somebody high, though, for how had they known that I would be made inspector?"

The Mayor cast a quick glance at the Commissioner and the latter gentleman crimsoned. "Go on," said the Mayor quietly.

"This morning I read in the paper that I was to be got rid of and that Grayson was to replace me. Well, that story didn't ring true; it sounded as though it was a game of some sort. I knew who'd written it. I haven't studied the stories of the Headquarters reporters for nothing. I could tell what Tom Griffith wrote if I saw it in a London paper. And I wondered who handed him such a yarn, me knowing that yesterday was his day off. I went to his room. He denied writing the story, but refused to tell me who had written it. He said he'd had a big night last night, been drunk, and he took a swig of whiskey to prove it. He smacked his lips over the drink. Men with a hangover don't do that; they kinda shudder at the mornin's mornin'. I've seen 'em, so I know. Moreover, I found a chip on his bureau. It was a cinch he'd had a big night O.K., but not in cafes. His breath didn't have any trace of liquor on it. But if he'd been in a gambling house, and didn't want me to know it, he didn't have to lie. Why did he lie, then? To steer me wrong, that's all.

"Well, it looked like my big chance to me. That chip was the

exact kind of chip that had been ordered for Smilo Brennan's new place a month ago. I'd looked up all necessary little details at the start. There isn't any house in town using that expensive sort of chip except Smilo's. Griffith evidently had been lucky, and held out one chip through a gambler's superstition.

"Well, Griffith had written that story and he'd been at Brennan's. Chances were he'd got the story at Brennan's. Now the question was: who handed the information to Brennan? 'Course Brennan could have faked it, but why? No reason for him to do it. He must have been satisfied with the way things were going. Very soft for him; protected for a twelve and a half percent rake-off. Who could be dissatisfied then? Dissatisfied enough to pass out a hint that things wouldn't continue as nice as they were?

"Well, Smilo Brennan hadn't started his new place on his own bankroll. I'd looked up his bankroll. And his advance information about my promotion —someone in the 'Hall.' Who? Two cliques in the 'Hall.' But neither of them would dare start a big gambling proposition without the other being in on it, too. But there *were* two cliques. And they weren't as friendly as they pretended to be, either. Could this be a hint from one side to the other? It looked it. Suppose, for instance, one clique wanted to hog most of the profits, but didn't dare come right out and say so? Suppose, instead, it hinted that things weren't going to be easy, and they went on to tell the other clique that the whole business would be smashed unless one side got the biggest bit? It wouldn't dare come right out and say so, but it would blame a change in the detective bureau. But before making any change it would show the other clique that such a change was likely to happen, that it *would* happen unless terms were made right. It would do that by putting a little piece in the paper, then disclaiming having inspired the piece, then pretending that unless a big bit went to an outsider the place would have to close. Plain hoggishness, that's all. But the thing was to find the hog. No doubt about the game; I've seen too many worked in just about that fashion.

"Well, such a hint, such an inspired yarn, could only come from one of two men, Cranston or Torney. It didn't come from Torney. I found *that* out easy enough. It could have come from Cranston; I found that out. I arrested him. I arrested Brennan, too. When I told him that I had Cranston, he came through with everything. He said that Cranston and Torney

had backed him in his game. So I pinched Torney, too. Brennan would never have confessed without my pinching either Cranston or Torney beforehand. He'd have thought their pull could beat any charge we laid against him. But with them jailed—he came through. Griffith the newspaperman came through late tonight, too. He got his story from Cranston at Smilo Brennan's, just as I thought. And it don't do any good for Cranston to holler. What was he doing giving out interviews about police policy from Smilo Brennan's gambling house? We've got the goods on him. It won't be hard, now that we've got a case, to prove that money passed from Torney and Cranston to Brennan at the times and places he says it did. The thing is, we're working from the big boys down, this time. Usually we try to work from the little feller up to the guy on top. It don't work. But working from the big guy down—well, when the little feller finds we've nailed the big guy—"

He shrugged his shoulders. The Mayor looked at the Commissioner.

"Is there any explanation of your appointing Inspector Tressiger to the head of the detective bureau?" asked the Mayor harshly.

"Torney and Cranston both recommended him," replied the Commissioner. "They're big in the party; they have influence; Tressiger's record was good."

"Wait a bit, Mr. Mayor," said Tressiger, as the Mayor frowned. "You're blaming the Commissioner. Why? You've taken orders from Cranston and Torney. Now don't get sore. Hear me through. You know you have. 'Cause why? Because they made you Mayor and because their orders have been suggestions. They've never asked you to do anything crooked. They've merely pointed out that so-and-so was a good worker for the 'Hall' that nominated and elected you. Same with the Commissioner. He takes hints from them. And they chose me because Brennan told them I'd stand for anything. The Commissioner ain't to blame."

"Thanks, Tressiger," said the Commissioner sardonically. "I'm just a child, a babe in the arms of crooks who— By Godfrey, here's a couple of crooks that'll go to jail, no matter how powerful they think they are!"

"Right," cried the Mayor. He looked at Torney and Cranston. "I knew your methods in politics were raw, but—as I never had any evidence against you, and as you had worked for me —why— I thought that the hue and cry about you was inspired by jealousy. Crooked! Blackening my administration! I'll see that your bail is so high—"

"Now, you wait a minute, Your Honor," interrupted Tressiger. "Seems I ought to be considered a bit."

"You will be; you'll be recommended for an increase of pay, and—"

"Shush," said Tressiger. "Give me three minutes, will you? All right, listen. Twenty years I have been watching the 'Hall' stick its nose into the Department. I've seen a-many scandals rise, and seen a-many crooks go to jail. And what happens?"

"New men take their places and the Department is corrupted again. 'Cause why? Because the Mayor is ambitious and needs the help of the politicians, or because he's blind and trusts the Commissioner, and the Commissioner needs the politician's help, or maybe he's blind and the politicians fix the coppers direct. But always politics butts in. Now, here's your chance. Jail these men and what happens? New leaders take their places and acquire new influence. Poiiticians' money will help an officer caught grafting fight his case for years and probably win out in the end. But suppose we were dead certain that no politician's money would help any copper we found crooked? Suppose I ran the detective bureau on the level, and no one could oust me? What would happen?"

"You'd clean the town, I think, Inspector," said the Mayor.

"Right! And suppose the big guys in the 'Hall' didn't dare interfere with you in any way. Suppose they ordered the alderman they own to support you in everything? I guess there'd not be a nickel's worth of graft in the building department, in the streets, in the parks, eh? Right! But suppose we jail these two men. Other leaders take their places and soon own the aldermen and their officials these guys own! Get it? But if we keep these birds in—if we keep this quiet—"

"Blackmail," interrupted the Mayor.

"If it's blackmail to forgive a guy the evil he's done provided he don't do any more, instead of jamming him into jail and making a place for other grafters to step into his place—We don't do nothing; we simply pat these guys on the head and tell 'em to behave, to let you alone, and the Commissioner alone, and me alone. That's all. What do you think?"

Slowly the Mayor's mouth widened in a smile. "They own the aldermen and we own them, eh? But I'm almost afraid it's compromising a felony."

"Well, I guess our conscience can stand a little thing like that, when it's for the good of the city," grunted Tressiger.

The Mayor was silent for a moment. He thought of the good things he could do for the city, things that the sinister influence of the invisible government had thus far prevented him from doing. He thought of what the police department could do were it rid of politics. Against all this good was the negligible benefit of sending these men to jail.

"You're right, Tressiger," he said. "You're a great man. You are indeed. You ought to be mayor; I mean it. You've done more for your city than you think. You've accomplished—"

"Nix, nix," said the embarrassed inspector. "I'm just a good cop, that's all. And a sleepy one, if anyone should ask you. G'night, Your Honor and Commissioner."

THE SAINT-O-GRAM

Here is another cryptogram, again an excerpt from a story appearing in this issue. Did you discover the formula used in coding the one in the last issue? While the formula used in this one is different, once you discover the coding method, the rest will be easy. Try it—and don't forget to let us know what you think of this new department!

V G T Z T A D K D C M V V C T D Q Q T I

A G T Z T Z T K T Z E T K Y X T D V D H C T K

D Q P P Z M Q W K A T Z T H T M Q B W T F V

D Q P A G T Q G T C T Q G D F F T Q T P

V Y B Y V G T Z T V Y J D Q P M

J D Q D B T P V Y A Z M B B C T V G Z Y N B G

V G T L Z Y A P.

Turn to page 114 for the answer.

this is for you

by . . . Hal Ellson

COLD winter rain fell all through the day, dampening and chilling the city. It was miserable out, worse for a man without work and no place to go.

Glowka stood in a doorway and scowled. He was a short powerfully-built Pole with blond hair and blunted face. Anger burned in his gray eyes. He spat in a puddle before his feet and took out a cigarette pack.

Only one left. He crushed the pack, flung it away and lit up. A chill shook his body and he swore under his breath, damned the rain.

Weather like this bothered the bones in his hand. But that was of minor consequence. It was walking that aggravated him, for he still limped a little and the search through the neighborhood bars was endless.

Every day for a week he'd made the rounds, listened and did not find the man he wanted, the face he couldn't remember.

"I'm telling you, if I ever lay eyes on him again, he'll be dead."

If he could remember the face. . . .

But time was running out, his funds were low. He had no way of getting more. Unless

Hal Ellson, author of DUKE, *turns to a waterfront where violence is a way of life. The King of the Waterfront boasts how they'd run men off the docks. "The guy that did the talking tried to put up a fight so we crippled him." Glouka, his fingers curled and stiff as claws, listens to the man who had done this to him.*

he could find work. But who would hire him now?

Fear struck at him and he didn't recognize its touch. Panic and hate disguised it. He found himself walking in the rain again.

A block away he stopped in front of a bar, one he'd been in a dozen times before during the week.

It's not the place, he thought, and was ready to go on again. But something held him there. He argued with himself. There was small chance of finding his man in here.

But his body was chilled. He needed a drink to sustain himself, make his blood run warm. He moved toward the door, stepped inside.

Anna stood behind the bar, heavy-set, jowled, gray-haired. Her face was like a blob of dough, eyes small and faded. They never missed anything. She ran the place herself, and it was a block up from the piers, a gathering point for men who belonged to the harbor.

No lights were lit, and no one cared. Twenty-odd men stood against the bar like shadows. A clammy dampness touched everything, dulling mirrors, distorting the faces reflected in them, flattening the sheen of ancient mahogany.

A man's domain, the drinkers crowded the bar, but there were chairs and tables off to the side. Only one table was occupied.

Glowka noticed the man who sat at it. He was short, heavy-set, with no neck to speak of and a broad face. His eyes were half-closed. The sleeves of his shirt were rolled up. Tattooed on one arm was a bird of prey, a monkey on the other. The beer in the old man's glass had gone flat, and he appeared to be dozing.

Rain still fell outside. Inside the bar it didn't matter. A man was talking, his voice louder than the others, domineering, commanding the attention of his listeners.

Glowka glanced at him, limped on toward the back of the bar and found a place. Anna appeared before him and waited for him to order.

"Whiskey," he said, and put a crumpled bill on the bar.

"What's your brand?"

"Anything you've got."

Anna served him and moved away. Her eyes took in the bar, glasses. She knew her business and went about it casually. No one had to call her or lift a hand. Each glass was refilled as soon as it was emptied.

Glowka downed his drink immediately and Anna came back to tend him. That done, he turned, looked at the old man at the table.

The old fellow hadn't moved. His glass remained untouched, his head slightly bowed.

Glowka turned back to the bar. Pain invaded the hand he held in his pocket and he swore to himself. A cry of anguish rose from the harbor now and diverted his thoughts. Beyond the sodden piers soft moanings came to him and told of shipping that limped through the gray pall that had invaded the harbor. All day those cries and moans had provoked him and he did not want to listen.

He reached for his glass and the man beside him spoke. "Rotten weather," he said.

Glowka turned. At the other end of the bar he heard the loud-mouthed one still talking. Drunk, he thought, irritated by the voice. Then he looked at the man who had spoken to him. He was an old fellow with weather-beaten face, an ugly scar on his forehead that looked done by an axe.

The old fellow smiled as Glowka raised his eyes. "A bad one, hey?"

"What?"

"The scar. Spoils my beauty."

Glowka smiled. "It's a real bad one."

"Drink up and have the next on me."

Glowka lifted his glass and drank. His companion did the same and glanced toward Anna who came forward and to refill the empty glasses. The loud-mouth at the front of the bar was still talking.

Glowka glanced toward him again, then noticed how much darker it had grown in the place, but no one bothered to ask for light. He turned back to the man beside him and his eyes again went to the scar.

"How'd you get it?" he said.

"What?"

"The scar."

"Oh, that. My barge was laying off Harlem. That's a bad spot, you know. I went ashore, came back to my cabin again, and you know how it is when you smell somebody around. I smelled somebody, but it was too late. The bugger slugged me."

"He really hit you."

"With a pipe. It took fifteen stitches, but I saw his face. I'm telling you, if I ever lay eyes on him again, he'll be dead."

Glowka stared at the scar and nodded his head. Anna saw it, too, but she appeared as unconcerned as the old man who sat at the table apparently asleep.

Farther down the bar, the loud-mouthed one was speaking again. His voice rang out above the muffled speech of the others, a twenty-note lay before him to pay for his listeners' drinks.

The old man at the table was one of the listeners, but he didn't drink. His face was masked, but hate was in his eyes. For the loud-mouth was no stranger.

Ten years back he'd ripped the old man open with a baling hook. Time had healed the torn

muscles, but not the wound in the old man's mind, and now he was waiting.

The loud-mouth had forgotten the incident. It had been one of many and he'd come too far to remember a minor brawl. Such things were beyond him now, and others did his dirty work.

"Three of them there were," the loud-mouth went on, speaking of a recent incident. "Imagine, Polacks looking for work on the piers, and none of 'em ever had the guts to set foot on 'em before. Maybe they were greenhorns, I don't know, but they left in an ambulance. If they'd kept shut, okay, but they'd come for work, they said, and weren't leaving till they got it."

Farther down the bar Glowka was listening and heard this. But for the waterfront it wasn't an uncommon story, so he lifted his glass to his lips, set it down again and said to the man beside him, "Suppose I wanted a job on a barge. How would I go about it?"

"Why work on a barge?" the answer came. "There's no money to be made."

"It's not money I'm after."

"What kind of work did you do before, if I'm not asking too much?"

"I longshored."

"Hell, then you'd never live on a bargeman's pay."

Glowka was about to answer but stopped himself, glanced toward the loud-mouth, then turned to the bargeman who was waiting for an answer.

"I can't do longshore work any more," he explained.

"Your legs give way?"

"No," said Glowka, and the loud-mouthed one's voice came to him again.

"Who's the guy up the bar that's doing all the talking?"

"Probably a longshoreman. You ought to know him."

"No, I'm new around this part of the waterfront."

The bargeman hooked his finger toward the old man sitting at the table. "Ask him," he said. "He's an old-timer around here. He can tell you if anybody can."

Glowka turned, looked at the old man, and walked to his table. "Pop, who's the guy that's doing all the talking? The one up front?"

"You don't know him?"

"No. What's his name?"

"That's the King."

"The King?"

"That's right. King of the waterfront — O'Farrell. Everybody knows him."

"Thanks. You want a beer?"

"No. This'll do me."

The old man closed his eyes and Glowka went back to the bar.

It was still raining outside, everything damp. A hoarse bellow came from the river. The men at the bar stirred to it and

a hush fell over them. O'Farrell was quiet now.

Something entered the place and enveloped them all. No one knew what it was but at that moment the sun was setting beyond the shrouded hills across the river and a sudden darkness struck through the streets outside. Gray puddles turned black on the sidewalks and the rain continued whispering as it fell.

Finally a man struck a match. The yellow light revealed a hard-bitten face with countless wrinkles.

The match fell to the wet sawdust on the floor. As if this were a signal, a murmur of conversation rose, grew louder while the ships on the river called to each other through the swirling darkness.

"Have another?" the bargeman said to Glowka.

"No, thanks. But to come back to our conversation, how does a man get a job on a barge?"

"Pick the company names off the boats. Some have addresses. Or look 'em up in the phone book and go to the offices."

"I'll do that."

"Suit yourself. But you'll have to get used to the job. When you ain't used to it it's no cinch. Fact is, I'd say it's better to stick to what you know."

Glowka looked at his shadowed image in the mirror across the bar, then drew his right hand from his pocket and raised his arm stiffly. He placed his hand on the bar and the fingers were curled and stiff as claws.

"See this," he said. "Once it was as strong as any hand that ever held a hook on any waterfront. It's crippled now. Might as well be buried."

"Can't the doctors do anything for it?"

"They say I got to wait. But what do I eat while I'm waiting?"

"What happened to it?"

About to answer, Glowka stopped himself, for O'Farrell's voice came to him again.

"We ran the three of them off the docks," O'Farrell was saying. "The guy that did the talking tried to put up a fight, so we crippled him. Say, when he reached the hospital, they probably thought a train ran over him."

Anna looked toward the windows now. It was darker outside and she'd decided to put on the lights, but she didn't move. Her eyes went to Glowka who was staring at O'Farrell.

Glowka stepped back from the bar. His face had gone white, his eyes were slits of icy blue. The bargeman frowned.

"Are you all right, Mac?" he asked.

Glowka didn't answer. Instead, he turned away and started toward the front of the bar.

"Hey, where you going?" the bargeman said after him.

Glowka paid no attention to the bargeman and kept moving forward. Anna had already started forward to switch on the lights, but she stopped and kept her eye on Glowka.

O'Farrell was still talking loudly when Glowka reached him, but he took no notice. The others around him did, struck by the look on his face. Then O'Farrell, too, became aware and turned to Glowka.

At the same moment, sensing trouble, the old man rose from the table. Anna stood motionless behind the bar, and O'Farrell opened his mouth to speak. But no words came from his mouth. A gun nuzzled his belly now, and only a few of the onlookers were aware of it.

"This is for you, Superman," Glowka said calmly.

There was a moment of silence, then four shots rang out and O'Farrell slumped to the floor. A deafening silence filled the place and no one moved. Then a wild shriek of laughter burst from the lips of the old man at the table, and the others rushed for the door, Glowka too.

Only two persons remained. Anna and the old man at the table. Anna walked calmly to the front of the bar, switched on the lights, came round to the front of the bar and looked down at O'Farrell. Her expressionless face was like a blob of dough, her small blue eyes pitiless.

The old man sat down again and folded his arms across his chest. He didn't speak, neither did Anna, and when the police arrived they learned nothing. Anna said she didn't know the man who'd fired the shots.

As for the old man, when he was questioned, all they could get from him was: "I am a Belgian. My name? My name is Van Druyst. I am a Belgian."

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF JACK CAGLIOSTRO

I remember the time I invoked the spirit of a woman who was right there in the room. That was embarrassing! I'd normally know something about the background of each customer—it makes sense in my kind of business—but the only stranger was this bland, colorless little woman who'd come with Mrs. Ferris, and I slipped. . . . I wanted Mrs. Ferris to do something about my Foundation for Higher Metaphysical Studies, and had half sold her on the idea. Mrs. Ferris had been a Hensdale, and I remembered hearing something about a sister who'd disgraced the Hensdales. Yes, I *know* that's inadequate researching. . . . Anyway, I stammered—I was supposed to be in a trance, after all—I could see them leaning forward, eyes gleaming, and then I was saying how, "Someone named Margaret is here—she wants to talk to her sister"—I heard a shocked whisper—and then someone turned the light on. How was I to know that Margaret Hensdale, policewoman, was in the audience?

walk-up to fear

by . . . Maysie Greig

THE real estate agent was persuasive, otherwise Emily would never have gone to the house in the East Sixties that evening.

It was growing late, behind her the sun was slanting and leaving the East River in shadow, its glow giving a faded beauty to the rather grim buildings as she hurried by them. But the agent, Mrs. Hanson, had assured her it wouldn't matter at what hour she viewed the apartment.

"Miss Mitford is there pretty nearly all the time," she'd said to Emily over the phone that morning. "She owns the building and has the ground floor and basement apartment. And this *is* one apartment I want you to consider, Miss Chisolm. From what you've told me it has everything you want, space and it's homelike. A walk-up I know, but it's only one flight. Personally I was charmed with it." She went on in her warm pleasant voice, talking to Emily not as an agent but as a friend, "I know you'd be happy there and

Her voice had changed. There was a quality in it again that seemed to bring the tension back into the room. . . .

Fabulous Maysie Greig, whose name is known to millions of readers, tells the quiet story of Emily Chisolm's search for an apartment that leads her into the shadow of Murder. Gwen Faraday had lived in the apartment before, but had had to leave rather suddenly. "Illness in the family." Gradually it becomes obvious that there is a more sinister explanation for her departure. . . .

Miss Mitford has had the apartment completely redecorated since the last tenant left a few months ago, rather suddenly I understand. You must admit it's a bargain, four rooms in such a good neighborhood for a hundred dollars."

The character of the street changed subtly after Emily passed Lexington Avenue. It became a street of small, gracious residences that had a flavor of old New York, a well-cared for section with trees spaced along the sidewalk. There was a tree outside Number 17, a slim caged in.

In this New York street it gave Emily a fleeting impression of the countryside, of space, of a world outside this closed-in world of city buildings.

The red door was in shadow. Red was a cheerful color. Red for courage, red for joy . . . red for danger. Emily smiled. Nothing could look less dangerous than this thin old house that slanted slightly towards the sidewalk as though it were bowing goodnight to the sun.

The cards in the lobby read: No. 1, Miss Mitford; No. 2, there was a blank; No. 3, Mr. Don Wakefield. When she pressed Miss Mitford's bell from somewhere in the house she heard a dog's excited barking. The buzzer went, she pushed open the door and found herself in a narrow hall.

"Were you wanting to see the apartment?" a woman's voice said. She seemed to speak overeagerly and the voice was harsh, almost masculine. It was the face of a woman in the middle forties, a pale, round face with oddly indefinite features, as though whoever had moulded them had been in a hurry. The chin was indefinite, the mouth sloppy, the nose sprawled a little but the small eyes were dark and unusually bright. They were looking brightly at Emily now taking in her appearance.

"I came from Mrs. Hanson, the agent," Emily said.

"You did? She always sends me such nice people. She understands I can't have just anyone in the house. It's too intimate with just three apartments. I must have someone congenial. It's a walk-up, but you don't mind? You're young. You're young," she repeated it as though savoring the words. She went on: "The door's open. I'm sure you'd rather look at it alone for the first time. Choosing an apartment is such a personal matter, like taking a lifelong friend or even a husband I always think. You and the apartment want to get acquainted without an outsider prying at you. Run along up. I'll see you later."

The door at the top of the stairs was open, Emily stepped

inside and felt for a light switch. Immediately and dramatically a large room came out of the shadows, a friendly well shaped room with tinted panelled walls, a large wood-burning fireplace, a mantel slightly, though not overly ornate with a square gilt framed mirror over it.

Emily went slowly forward, walking with awe as though she were afraid to step through a dream which had incredibly materialized. Already, in her mind, she was furnishing this room with the pieces she'd stored after she'd sold the home. The fireplace would make a perfect setting for the two huge tapestried armchairs, one in which her father, Professor Chisolm, had always sat with herself curled in the other facing him, reading, sewing, doing cross-word puzzles on so many nights. Too many nights, she'd thought lately. Youth has a habit of slipping away from you. But those two chairs meant home to her and this apartment could be a home, she decided, and she wanted a home in this rather frighteningly unhomelike city.

She moved over to a large bay window which looked out onto a small, well-cared for garden. Maybe I'll be allowed to sit out there and read week ends, she thought. Week ends could be long in New York and if you went to Central Park and watched people walking about in pairs somehow you felt more alone than if you'd stayed in your hotel bedroom.

In the evening mist the garden looked peaceful, but suddenly it was no longer peaceful. A small shape, blacker than the shadows, darted out, a dog that seemed to bounce on springs rather than run, and immediately he made for a flower bed in a far corner and started digging. He dug furiously as though, Emily thought oddly, he was trying to make up for lost time. The dirt flew into the air and settled on the surrounding beds, onto the path, onto his black, woolly coat. Then as she watched another shape emerged from the house. Miss Mitford seized the black poodle by the collar.

"You dreadful dog. You wicked Timo. You know you're not allowed to dig. How dare you disobey me?" Her voice rasped and she kicked the dog viciously. The animal gave a sharp, frightened howl and struggled helplessly.

A moment later she looked up and saw Emily standing by the open window. She waved and laughed. "This naughty dog is ruining my garden. I'll lock him inside and be up with you in a moment."

Emily went through the rest of the apartment quickly. How odd it should be perfect, every-

thing she'd wanted but despaired of getting, the kitchen was a real kitchen. It would be fun cooking intimate little dinners here, the sort of dinners her father had enjoyed so much. She hoped she would meet someone here to share those dinners with her. And really, wasn't that why she'd cut adrift from the small Mid-western University town after her father's death? She had come back from the funeral to the empty house and suddenly she had revolted at the thought of staying on. Here she'd been known so long as Professor Chisolm's daughter, his housekeeper, his amanuensis. Her father's friends liked and respected her. She had a good brain, they said, she didn't flaunt her femininity at you, it was a pity she had never married. They'd always invited her to their parties and nine times out of ten she'd been the extra woman. They'd apologized, single men in that town apart from the students were so scarce, but they knew she didn't mind.

"Well, and how do you like it?"

Miss Mitford had entered the bedroom noiselessly. It was an oddly shaped room, round at one end and there was a large, semicircular mirror.

"I like it very much, but, of course, there are many things to be considered." Emily was surprised at her own caution, for caution wasn't one of her characteristics.

"Nonsense, if you like a place there's nothing to be considered." She went on eagerly, insistently, "I'd like you as a tenant. I like *you*. Are you in business?"

"I'm a reader for a publishing firm, Clingford and Wilson," Emily told her. "We do educational books. They were my father's publishers and when he died I wrote to them and they offered me the job."

Miss Mitford nodded and her bright eyes continued to dwell on Emily avidly. She seemed pleased with what she saw. Emily was slim and fairly tall, she had pleasant if not exactly distinguished features, her brown hair was soft and pretty, her gray eyes wide and kindly.

"I see, *literary*," Miss Mitford said. "I enjoy a good book myself. We'd be companionable and frankly that's everything to me in renting this apartment. I'd like a nice girl up here like you. I'd like," she paused and Emily had an odd impression that she was listening, "to hear movement and laughter in here, I want to feel the place lived in again." She went on eagerly, "I'd look after you if you were ill. I used to be a nurse. We could help each other." Her hand reached out and caught hold of Emily's arm. A fat hand

like Miss Mitford's face, but it had a surprising strength.

"I'm usually pretty busy, Miss Mitford. I bring manuscripts home to read at nights."

"But we would have week ends." Then abruptly the eagerness died out of the woman's voice. "But perhaps you have a boy friend? Someone who works in the publishing house?"

Emily laughed. "There are only two men in Clingford and Wilson Incorporated. Mr. Clingford has a domineering wife, four children and he commutes, Mr. Wilson collects rare species of orchids and apparently he has never met a woman who could compete with an orchid. No, I haven't any boy friends."

Miss Mitford nodded again, but her eyes were still more eager than compassionate. "I know how it is, if you don't give them what they want they don't want you. Gwen was like you, sweet and companionable, but men didn't want her. Even that man upstairs didn't want her in that way, though he kept asking her up. Gwen Farraday, had this apartment before you. She," she broke off, "left suddenly, an illness in her immediate family. That's why I find it so lonely here."

"But there's a tenant in the top apartment," Emily said. She tried to move away, but Miss Mitford's hand still clung onto her arm.

Miss Mitford snorted. "Don Wakefield. I inherited *him* when I bought the house. He's on a ceiling rental. I wish I could get rid of him. He's a queer one. Oh, he's presentable enough, but it's all those smelly chemicals he has up there I object to. He's turned one room into what he calls a laboratory. I haven't seen it, but Gwen told me about it. It reminded her of a morgue, she said. A morgue in my house," she shuddered. "But that's the excuse he makes for not having a regular cleaning woman. Once I asked him if he didn't want my woman to come clean up for him. He smiled in his superior way and said, 'Then you'd know all my secrets, wouldn't you, Miss Mitford? You'd know about my experiments and the corpses I dissolve in my zinc tubs.' I could have slapped his face. And Gwen kept saying he was nice. Nice," she snorted. "Some women think any man nice who notices them. But there comes a time when all fools have to pay. I wonder how much Gwen had to pay? I wonder."

Her voice had taken on a curious tone. Emily had never considered herself a nervy person, but just then she felt she wanted to get out into the street quickly, to be walking.

But still she couldn't break away from Miss Mitford's hand.

"Is Mr. Wakefield a chemist?" she asked to fill in the pause.

"He's employed by a firm of chemists. Gwen said he's always experimenting, but I wish he'd keep his experiments out of my house. I don't trust him. That's why I want you here, dear, and if it's the rent that's troubling you, supposing I say seventy a month?"

Emily glanced around and suddenly she found herself looking at three Miss Mitfords all reflected in the semi-circular mirror. One Miss Mitford was smiling reassuringly and ingratiatingly, another was looking at her with shrewd hard eyes as though trying to sum her up, a third had a curiously secretive expression.

Emily got free of Miss Mitford's hand finally.

"I'll let you know about the apartment," she promised and half ran out of the apartment and down the stairs.

At the foot of the stairs a black shadow was crouched, the poodle dog.

"Don't be afraid of Timo, dear." Miss Mitford's voice sounded right behind her. "Timo wouldn't hurt anyone. He loves his mother. Timo come and love your mother."

The dog didn't move. "Come Timo and love your mother," she repeated. Her voice had sharpened and Emily was aware of a strange almost frightening quality in it. Then with one leap the dog was in her arms, crouched there.

"There, see how he loves his mother," she said, fondling him.

The night air felt crisp on Emily's face and clean. She walked quickly to the corner of Third Avenue, almost running, then she stopped. Why am I running away? Am I mad? It's here, the apartment I've dreamed about. All the furniture would fit in perfectly, besides it's cheap, and what's really wrong with Miss Mitford? She's probably only lonely and loneliness does make people queer. At least, she amended, it makes them act queerly at times, but once I get used to her I don't suppose I'll mind her and if I hesitate I may lose the apartment.

There was a small restaurant on the corner of Third Avenue. She turned into it and ate fried chicken and drank coffee and felt better. She noticed a tall, thin man eating alone in one of the booths; possibly she noticed him because there were so few people in the restaurant.

After the second cup of coffee she had quite made up her mind to take the apartment. She decided to let Miss Mitford know at once and walked back up the street to No. 17. She rang the bell and waited for the buzzer

but nothing happened. Miss Mitford must have gone out and she was about to go home when she became aware that she was being watched through the lower downstairs window. How do you know you are being watched? Emily didn't actually see the eyes watching her but she felt they were there in the darkened interior of the room.

"Can I help you?" A man's voice spoke behind her. It was brusque and pleasant. "I live here."

She turned. He was the tall, thin man she'd seen in the restaurant.

"You're Mr. Wakefield?"

He raised his eyebrows in surprise. "How did you know?" He added quickly, "You're a friend of Gwen's?"

"No. It's about the apartment. I saw it earlier this evening. I came back to tell Miss Mitford I'd take it. She mentioned your name."

"Oh." In the street light she saw his brown eyes look her over, obviously speculating about her, she thought wryly, and feeling slightly hurt he didn't seem enthusiastic about having her as a fellow tenant.

She said quickly, "I rang Miss Mitford's bell; she doesn't answer. But," she hesitated and indicated the downstairs window. "I feel someone's in there. They were watching me a moment ago through the window."

"That's probably Timo," he said unsmiling. "He sits there waiting."

"Waiting for his mistress to come back?"

"I think he's waiting for Gwen Farraday." He went on as though he needed to explain. "She had the apartment you're after. She was very fond of the dog and he was devoted to her. He wouldn't be waiting for his mistress."

"But he, he seems to like his mistress. I saw him jump up into her arms." She was surprised that her voice sounded high pitched, even nervous.

"I know. Come, Timo. Come to your mother," he mimicked Miss Mitford's voice and gave an unkind laugh. She wondered if Miss Mitford's obvious dislike of him might not be justified.

"Thank you. I'll telephone Miss Mitford." She had half turned away when he said: "Forgive me, but have you relatives or friends in town?"

She turned back slowly. "No, I've only recently arrived. There's my boss, of course."

He nodded as though he'd half expected an answer of that sort.

"If you come *here* I'd suggest you ask him to telephone you if you shouldn't turn up for work one day. Goodnight." He raised his hat and let himself into the building.

Ten days later Emily was moved into the apartment. It was the sensible thing to do and she had always prided herself on being sensible. Goodness, you couldn't let an opportunity like this slip up and now that she was actually here with all her own furniture she was delighted with it. Miss Mitford had come up several times offering assistance, but she hadn't made a nuisance of herself. It had been a disappointment to learn she couldn't use the garden, but Miss Mitford had explained that, if she made an exception of Emily she'd have to extend the same privilege to Mr. Wakefield. "And a man makes such a mess. I'd be continually cleaning up cigarette stubs. Besides that garden is my private place," she added.

But, as the days passed, it occurred to Emily that Miss Mitford seldom used the garden and since that first evening she hadn't seen Timo in the yard once. Poor Timo, she decided, must lead a very dull life, no wonder he escaped whenever he could. Sometimes she'd hear his sharp toe nails on the wood floor of Don's apartment above, and once, when she'd left her door ajar he'd come in and run about from room to room smelling in closets as though he were searching. She tried to buy his friendship, by scraps of meat and bits of chocolates, but he wasn't interested. He just stood and looked at her with his woolly sheep-like head slightly to one side, and somehow she'd felt uncomfortable as though she were an interloper in this place.

As the days passed she found herself becoming increasingly curious about the girl who had had the apartment before her, Gwen Farraday. What had she been like and how had she furnished this apartment? She had heard it said we all leave a stamp of our personality wherever we live, and the imprint of Gwen's personality must be very strong here, she decided, since she thought of her so much. It was as though, in some strange way, the girl's personality were insisting on acknowledgment and sometimes she had an uncanny feeling of sharing the apartment with a ghost, but a live ghost, since somewhere in the Middle West the girl was living, nursing a sick relative. She knew very little about her, other than that she had been lonely. But aren't we all, Emily thought, tossing restlessly in bed, but as well as being lonely she must have been kind since the dog was still devoted to her.

Some little time after she had moved in she was coming home from work when she saw the lower window of the house next door open and a pleasant-faced

woman with untidy gray hair put Timo out onto the sidewalk. She spoke to Emily.

"You've moved into Gwen's apartment, haven't you? I wish you'd take this dog back into the house, he keeps coming into ours and keeps scrabbling through the cupboards. It's a nuisance for my son's at Midtown University doing a surgery course and he's always bringing home his homework, skeletons and bones and things."

Emily took charge of Timo, but before she let herself into No. 17 she asked, "You knew Gwen Farraday. What was she like?"

"Such a nice girl," the woman said warmly. "She used to come in and talk to me. She was very friendly but at times I felt," she paused and went on more slowly, "she had something on her mind."

"I hear she left suddenly," Emily said.

The woman nodded, and pushed some wisps of straggling hair into place. "She didn't even come in to say good-bye. I suppose at the last minute she was too busy. I didn't see her leave, though I did see her furniture leave a short while afterwards in a storage van. If you should hear news of her please let me know and won't you come in yourself some evening, Miss . . . Miss . . . I'm Mrs. Watkins." She flushed slightly.

"Emily Chisolm," Emily supplied.

"Well, don't *you* go away without saying good-bye, will you?" Mrs. Watkins said. She nodded and smiled and closed the window.

As she let herself into the house Emily had a curious unaccountable sense of fear. She tried to shake it off but it stayed with her and she was glad she had Timo up with her for company. Don Wakefield looked in that same evening.

"I've meant to come down before to ask if I could help you move in, but I've been busy on an experiment and now I've left it too late. You're very comfortable I see." He looked down at her from his superior height and smiled. His face with the pronounced features was much younger when he smiled.

"Do come in and see what you think of it," she invited, feeling more eager than the occasion warranted, but it was fun showing him the way she'd arranged the pieces, her father's glassed-in bookcase, his round walnut study table, the black framed etchings he'd picked up when studying abroad. He was very appreciative. They talked for quite a while, and she felt sorry when finally he said he must go. Impulsively she asked him to come down and have dinner with her on Wednesday night and after a slight hesita-

tion he said he'd like to come. As he was leaving she mentioned her encounter with Mrs. Watkins and said that their neighbor had been anxious for news of Gwen Farraday.

She had a queer feeling that with the mention of Gwen's name his attitude changed. He had been friendly and communicative, but suddenly she noticed that same secretive guarded expression she'd seen on his and other people's faces when Gwen's name was mentioned.

"I'd like news of her too," he said abruptly. "She was talking to me upstairs the night she left, but she didn't tell me she was going. And yet she seemed worried, rather desperately worried about something, I felt."

"Miss Mitford told me you were friendly with her," she murmured.

"Miss Mitford told you that, did she?" he commented dryly. "Gwen wasn't interested in men as men. I gather she'd been hurt rather badly by some man when she was younger and it had left her with a jaundiced outlook on men in general. I think," he paused, "she used me mainly as an escape."

"An escape?" she asked startled.

His eyes traveled down to the floor below. "In the same way as Timo tries to escape, into my apartment, into yours, into the house next door. Some forms of emotionalism can be difficult to live with," he added.

Later that same evening Miss Mitford came in. It was the first time Emily had seen her in street clothes, and in a black tailored suit with a fox fur and a small Juliette cap she looked quite ordinary.

She settled herself in one of the big arm chairs and smiled at Emily, but always when she smiled Emily wished she hadn't seen those three reflections of her in the mirror that first night she'd come here.

"You can't say I've worried you exactly, Emily, but I always believed in leaving people alone until they get straightened out. And how nice you've made it, quite homelike. Oh, yes, the apartment has come alive again. I don't believe in ghosts. You have to be strong-minded about these things, don't you agree?" She had lowered her voice and was leaning forward, looking at Emily in an avid way.

Again Emily was conscious of that sense of fear which was unnerving because she could see no reason for it. She kept her voice steady with an effort. "I've never been particularly worried about ghosts. Is there a ghost up here?"

Miss Mitford gave her a sharp sideways glance. "Of course not. I was just romancing. I'll look forward to com-

ing up and having a little dinner with you one night. You did say you liked to cook. Could I come Wednesday?" She smiled and blinked her small eyes at Emily.

"I'm sorry, Miss Mitford. I'm engaged Wednesday night." She hesitated and decided to tell her the truth. She had an uncomfortable feeling Miss Mitford would make it her business to know anyhow. "I've asked Mr. Wakefield to come down and have dinner with me."

"Oh, he's started on *you*, has he?" the woman said.

"What are you talking about?" Emily asked sharply.

"Don't try and fool *me*, dear," Miss Mitford was looking secretive and sly. "He was always pestering *her* to go up there or let him come down here. *She* much preferred to be with me, but would he let her alone? I thought at times," her voice had taken on an added intensity, "she was afraid *not* to go up there when he asked her to."

Emily got up abruptly. I don't want to listen to her, she thought, she's trying to make me dislike him. But why? What's it all about?

She had moved over to the window. "What did Gwen Farraday look like?" she asked.

"She was small, dear, a fragile thing and pale. I don't like robust women though," she gave a short laugh, "I'm robust enough myself. She had nice lines and good bone format as you have. Oh, yes, she was attractive, but men didn't see it. They are such fools."

"But Mr. Wakefield must have liked her since, as you said, he kept asking her up there," Emily commented dryly.

"You're interested in him, aren't you?" Miss Mitford smiled knowingly. "I heard her up there talking to him the night she left. That's the last time I did hear her talking to anyone."

Again Emily felt that curious sense of apprehension.

"But surely she said good-bye to you, Miss Mitford?"

"She did not," the woman said. "As I told you the last time I heard her voice was when she was up there talking to *him*. That was around midnight. I've sometimes thought," she broke off. She added vehemently, "Why does he have those chemicals up there in tubs, why all the secrecy?"

The night air blowing in through the window was warm but Emily felt cold. She wanted passionately to get rid of Miss Mitford but she could find no excuse. She looked out of the window and saw that a half moon was rising. The small garden was mostly in shadow, but it was light enough for her to see the dog digging. Last time

he had dug furiously, regardless of the havoc he was causing, but tonight he dug slowly, secretly, determinedly.

Emily felt some compunction about Miss Mitford's bulbs so she told her what was happening. The woman gave a sharp cry and ran from the room. Emily could hear her feet clattering noisily down the stairs and then her voice hoarsely and angrily admonishing Timo.

The night before Don was to come to supper she met Mrs. Watkins watering the lower window boxes outside her house. Mrs. Watkins seemed pleased at the interruption and invited her inside for a sherry. Emily accepted gladly. She hadn't quite got used to returning every night to an empty apartment, of having no one to call "hello" to. She and her father had lived in such close companionship she found it difficult to live alone.

Mrs. Watkins showed her around the house which was much the same as Miss Mitford's except that it hadn't been converted into apartments. The sitting room was on the first floor and that led into her son's study. The elder woman laughed heartily when Emily started at the sight of a full sized skeleton on the table.

"My son's latest homework," she said, jabbing at her hair. "We always think up names for them. This one we call Aunt Maria. You have to be funny about these things, otherwise they might get you down, don't you think? But I'm sure it's these that attract that wretched dog and makes him keep coming here. I've yet to find how he gets in," she added.

They sat by the open window and drank a glass of sherry and the scent of daffodils in the window boxes made it very pleasant.

"I keep wondering about Gwen Farraday," Mrs. Watkins said presently, "It wasn't like her to go away without saying good-bye. I think she liked me and she had very few friends. I mean," she added slowly, "few friends who would have bothered to inquire about her."

"Didn't she have a job?" Emily asked.

The elder woman shook her head. "She didn't have regular employment. She wasn't strong, but she got part-time work through some agency, baby sitting, taking children to the park, that sort of thing. The agency wouldn't really miss her or be curious." She put down her glass and leaned forward. "I've wondered if I should go to the police," she said.

All that evening Emily found she was unaccountably nervous. She kept all the lights on in the apartment and busied herself preparing the dinner for tomor-

row night. She had always found cooking soothing to her nerves, but tonight, although she was preparing the meal for Don, her mind wasn't on it. She kept thinking of Gwen Farraday, piecing together all she had heard about the girl, trying to make the various pieces fit and again she had the obsession that somehow the girl was still here in the apartment, as real as Don and Miss Mitford and Timo. She moved restlessly from one room to the other but finally she couldn't stand the silence of these rooms any longer. Had Gwen felt like this too? Was that why, as Miss Mitford had told her, she'd kept going up to Don's apartment? To escape, he'd said, but to escape what? She felt irritated with herself, but the feeling of nervousness increased. She ran up to Don's apartment and knocked, but there was no reply so she went down to Miss Mitford's. The door was ajar and she thought Miss Mitford might be out in the garden watering her plants, a chore she sometimes did at this hour of the evening.

Miss Mitford had never invited her inside. The sitting room was dark and cluttered with furniture and ornaments, the sort of bric-a-brac your parents or grandparents picked up on their travels abroad; ebony elephants with yellowing ivory tusks, a Chinese gong, a dusty Japanese pagoda, some old Minton cups, the china as thin as paper, a dingy Spanish shawl draped the grand piano.

The sliding doors which lead into the bedroom were open. As she stepped through she heard a low growl, Timo was crouched in front of an open chest.

As much to reassure herself as him she spoke aloud: "It's only me, Timo. Where's your mistress?"

The light was switched on in the closet. Miss Mitford must have treasured the gowns that hung there over a long span of years, but as well she saw a number of much smaller dresses, size ten or eleven, ones which Miss Mitford could never have worn and it was before these gowns that Timo crouched, guarding them.

She didn't know why she shivered, why she ran from the apartment, why her sense of fear was stronger than it had been at any time since she had moved in, why she kept the lights burning in her bedroom all that night and as a result slept very little, why she rushed out next morning without any breakfast and found herself in the ordinary dull publisher's office with a feeling of almost hysterical relief. It was lucky she had a busy day, there was no time to think. Mr. Wilson had gone off on another orchid hunt and the printers had in-

serted a page upside down in a book on medieval pottery which gave Mr. Clingford and herself a great deal of telephoning and extra work. Finally they got it straightened out but before she left she asked Mr. Clingford that if she shouldn't turn up for work one morning would he telephone her? She wrote down her number and put it before him on his fussily tidy desk. It was what Don had told her to do but at the time he'd suggested it, it had seemed a strange and rather stupid suggestion.

Mr. Clingford looked rather startled and peered at her over his thick-rimmed glasses. "But, Miss Chisolm, you're not *contemplating* being ill?"

"Oh, no, but," she had to make some reasonable excuse, "I'm alone in the apartment. I mightn't be able to phone."

He nodded and drew a small diary from his pocket. "I'll make a note of it. You have been looking a little peeky lately. What's the matter my dear girl, nerves? I've seen you start when the telephone rings or if someone comes into the room suddenly."

"I know it's stupid," she said, feeling breathless. "I suppose it was moving into the new apartment."

He nodded again. "You need to get out of town for a few days. I'll speak to the wife."

That night when Don came down for dinner she found for the first time in days she was able to relax. He sat by the fireplace in the big tapestry arm chair in which her father had sat, he smoked a pipe and knocked the ashes out into the grate as her father had done.

He complimented her on the sherry she had bought and presently with a smile that showed her he too was relaxed he said: "This is nice, Emily. You're a very comfortable person to be with. When you talk you have something to say. I'm not good at small talk myself. I guess that's why I don't get on with the usual run of women. They chatter—"

She smiled. "I've never been a great success with men," she confessed.

"You've an inferiority complex, Emily, but don't be psychoanalyzed, please. I like you as you are. You are diffident and sensitive but if you're a thinking person as I believe you are you're always conscious of how far short you fall of the standard you set yourself. Some people try to escape by indulging in self advertisement. Up to a point I suppose they're justified since this is an advertisement crazy age, but there must come a time when they have to take stock of themselves and I can't think that can be a happy

experience. I think you're happier as you are, Emily," it was nice to hear him call her by her given name, "you may suffer from being shy and unassertive but you can never be hit down as hard as those who are aggressive are."

"You talk very much as my father did," she smiled again faintly. "I suppose it should comfort me, but," she paused. She was thinking how often she had suffered as a young girl being overlooked by hostesses, being passed over at parties by her friends' brothers, and over indulged by her father as though not understanding he was trying in some blundering way to compensate her.

She went on bravely looking across at him. "But to have some virtues doesn't help unless someone wants you with those virtues. I'm sorry I'm talking like this," she broke off, coloring. She didn't know why she was talking in this very personal way.

"I'm glad you are. I think we're getting to know each other." He bent forward and knocked the ashes out of his pipe. She liked the shape of his head and the way his dark hair grew back off his forehead. She liked the shape of his hands; they were thin but they had strength.

There was the sound of scrabbling from the apartment above. They both looked up at the ceiling sharply and he smiled.

"Timo. I must have left the door open. How does he always manage to get out the moment his mistress's back is turned? Miss Mitford was on her way out when I was coming in tonight."

She had a feeling of relief she couldn't account for and yet at the same time with the mention of Miss Mitford's name the comfortable atmosphere that had come into the apartment with Don's entry seemed to go.

She heard herself ask suddenly, "Was Gwen Farraday like *me* at all?"

He looked at her reflectively, his brown eyes narrowed.

"In some ways. She was quiet like you are but underneath I guessed she was rather frighteningly complicated. There was some hidden quality in her that I didn't think she liked herself and she tried to escape from it. I believe she was afraid to be alone and at the same time afraid of people. I believe, as I said before, to come up and talk to me was an escape. Complex emotional relationships are not always between men and women," he added quietly.

She felt cold.

The window behind her was open. She rose to close it but paused with her hands on the sill.

"Oh, dear, poor Timo. He

will catch it. He's been digging in the garden again."

"That's probably why he went up to my apartment, hiding. That dog has a guilt complex." He smiled.

"Shouldn't you go upstairs and fetch him down here?"

"Why? I'm happy here. For once I feel comfortably relaxed." He smiled at her again slowly, lazily, and suddenly she knew they were friends. Her life was no longer empty, but the newness of this feeling and the happiness it gave her made her unaccountably nervous.

They had dinner by candlelight. He complimented her on the food and the preparation that had gone into it.

"I'm not a bad cook myself," he said. "You must come up and eat with me one night. That is," he hesitated, "when I can find someone to clean up the place."

"Miss Mitford seems upset you don't have a regular weekly cleaning woman," she told him.

"I guess I should," he agreed. "But for so long when I was working on my degree I lived on practically nothing. I can't get used to spending now. I suppose I'm naturally mean."

She laughed disbelieving him and asked what sort of experiments he was working on. He told her he was busy on a new project and that the combine for which he worked had been encouraging. Should they decide to put it on the market he'd make a tidy sum. "I might treat myself to another apartment. As you know Miss Mitford hates the sight of me."

She felt rather bleak. "You're thinking of leaving here?"

"This isn't exactly a gay atmosphere, Emily. Or rather," he amended, "it hasn't been. But now," he paused and smiled across at her with both gravity and sincerity. "I might not be in such a hurry to go at that."

They heard a determined scratching on the outer door.

"That must be Timo. He's probably got tired of waiting for you upstairs." She went into the sitting room and opened the hall door. Timo came in purposefully, a very determined looking dog. In the lamplight on the rug he deposited something small and stood on guard over it, but at the same time looking up at Emily as much as to say, "There, I knew I'd find it and I have."

Emily looked down and gave a short sharp scream. Don had followed her into the room.

"What's the matter?" he began, sensing the tension in the atmosphere, then he, too, saw it. It was the skeleton of a small hand.

"Timo brought it in." She didn't like the sound of her own voice.

He stood staring down at it. "It might be a woman's hand," he said slowly.

"Yes." She felt colder than the night outside.

"But where on earth did he get it? Didn't he just come down from my apartment?" he asked sharply.

She had to force her voice. "We certainly heard him up there earlier this evening."

"But where's he been in the meantime?" he began and stopped. There was a pause. They both stood without moving. Timo stood still too, looking expectantly from one to the other of them. It was as though he were trying to convey something.

"This is quite mad. There must be some simple explanation," Don said at last. His voice, too, was hoarse. But neither of them seemed to know what that simple explanation could be. A feeling of horror was crowding in on them, it was tearing their pleasant companionship apart. And then they heard the front door open, footsteps downstairs, then coming up the stairs and stopping outside Emily's door.

"I don't want to interrupt your dinner, dear," Miss Mitford said archly when Emily opened the door to her. "But is Timo here? Ah, there he is the little monkey. I've yet to know how he gets out when I carefully shut him in. But," her voice changed sharply. She was staring down at the skeleton of the hand on the rug, "What's that?"

Again there was a pause. It seemed to last forever.

"The remains of a human hand," Don said.

Miss Mitford didn't scream, she just went on staring down at it and then slowly, or so it seemed to Emily, her small black eyes moved towards the window, but the drapes were pulled across it.

"But where on earth did Timo get hold of that?" she asked finally.

"He was up in my apartment earlier," Don said.

"I knew you did something horrible up there. No wonder you don't want a cleaning woman," she cried.

"This seems to bear out your theory, doesn't it, Miss Mitford?" he said quietly.

The shrill sound of the outer doorbell was shattering on their nerves. Emily almost ran as she crossed the room to press the buzzer. They heard the front door click and someone walk up the stairs. It was Mrs. Watkins.

She stood in the doorway breathing hard and pushing stray wisps of hair into place. "I hope I haven't come at an awkward time, Emily, but you did ask me to call in one evening and I was alone." She smiled and added,

"But I haven't been entirely alone. Timo was with me until a short while ago. I was wondering if he'd come home."

Emily stepped aside and showed her the dog and what he'd brought in. "Good heavens, the wretched dog," Mrs. Watkins exclaimed. "He will rummage in the closet where Jack keeps his homework, as I call it. They do fuss at the hospital if he loses bits of their precious bones." As she spoke she moved across and picked the hand up off the rug casually as though she were picking a handkerchief.

How does tension disintegrate? One moment it had been there, alive and vehement, the next they were all laughing rather weakly and saying what a mischievous dog Timo was, but weren't all poodles mischievous, they had a small part of devil in them? Miss Mitford was promising to keep him out of Mrs. Watkins' house, but Mrs. Watkins said she didn't really mind him for he *was* company with Jack away at the hospital such a lot. Now she must be going (although she'd only just arrived) but no one seemed to have the wish nor the energy to stop her.

But, as she was half across the room, Emily's telephone rang. Miss Mitford, obligingly, darted across and picked up the receiver.

"Oh, *yes, oh, yes,*" they heard her say. "But how *nice* to hear from you again, Gwen dear. You've just arrived back in New York? But *of course* you must come and see me. I'm afraid I couldn't keep the apartment vacant for you. Yes, I have a new tenant, such a sweet girl. You'll like her. But do *come,* dear. Tomorrow or the next day? I'll love to see you. I'm so glad your aunt is better. All right dear, good-bye for now. *Good-bye.*"

She looked around, smiling. "That was Gwen. Dear little Gwen Farraday. She's back in New York and coming to see us. Isn't that fine?"

"I'd like to have spoken to her," Mrs. Watkins said.

"Oh, you will tomorrow or the next day. I'll take Timo downstairs now, the bad little dog. Come Timo, lamb. Come to your mother."

The small black dog growled and backed away. "He thinks I'm going to punish him, but I'm not," she said. "Come Timo, come to your mother." Her voice had changed, there was a quality in it that seemed to bring the tension back into the room again, but only momentarily for the dog sprang obediently into Miss Mitford's arms and she and Mrs. Watkins went out together talking amiably. It was all so ordinary, such anti-climax that Emily wanted to giggle weakly. Don seemed to be suf-

fering from the same nervous reaction.

"I could do with a drink. There's a little bar at the corner of Madison. Come along," he said finally, explosively.

Emily felt a rush of relief at the thought of escaping from this apartment even temporarily. She got her coat, and Don and she walked out into the spring night and it seemed natural they should walk closely together, her arm drawn through his.

The bar was small, crowded and cheerful and for a time they talked of other things but finally they came back to it.

"What happened tonight shows what fools we can be when we let our imaginations take hold of us," he said smiling. "We like to think we human beings are thinking animals but I'm beginning to doubt it."

"Poor Timo, he certainly stirred up some excitement tonight," she agreed slowly.

"I wonder if Miss Mitford had the least idea what we were thinking?" he asked abruptly.

"Oh, I hope not. It would be awful." She went on quickly, "She is queer in many ways but I'm sure it's only because she's lonely. She has been kind to me and I feel she misses Gwen Farraday more than she admits. I hope she comes soon. Frankly I'm curious to see her. It isn't only because she was the last tenant in the apartment, But," she frowned slightly, "there are things about her which don't add up."

"What things?" he asked bluntly, irritably.

"Oh, just things like leaving her clothes in Miss Mitford's closet and going off suddenly in the night without saying goodbye, not even writing."

He shrugged those aside. "She was a neurotic little thing as I told you, always secretly liking to imagine herself the center of some big drama. A psychologist could explain why. She spent her days in looking after children that weren't hers and her evenings with Miss Mitford. What a life." He finished his drink.

Emily wondered uncomfortably if her days spent with Mr. Clingford and Mr. Wilson mightn't in time create a neurosis in her as well.

"I guess we ought to go back," she said aloud.

He swung around on the stool and smiled. "Have you been looking at your engagement book?"

She laughed. "I haven't even got one."

They took a cab and ended up in a small club on Eighth Street vaguely reminiscent of the twenties. They had ham and eggs, chianti that hadn't come from Italy but for Emily it was wonderful. It may have been

that the tension of the evening was still exciting their nerves, but Don and she seemed to have plunged from friendship into a warmer, more satisfying relationship. Sitting in that intimate atmosphere while a piano and an accordion played in the background they learned a great deal about one another, and the things they learned they liked.

They stayed until the Club seemed on the point of closing, the musicians were gone, the barman was yawning as he automatically wiped the bar down for the tenth or twelfth time, and the waiter hovered near their table suggestively, his eyes reproachful.

"It must be terribly late," Emily said as though making a discovery, "but I have enjoyed it."

"We must do this often." He grinned across at her and added, "It's nearly three. Not much sleep for either of us tonight."

But as it happened there was to be none. When their cab drew up before the thin, old house on the East Sixties a police car was outside and a uniformed man stepped up to them.

"Miss Chisolm and Mr. Wakefield?" he asked.

"That's right. What's happened?" Don asked sharply.

"Lieutenant Dutton of the Homicide Bureau is in the downstairs apartment. He wants you in there right away," the man said.

Emily was glad of the comfort and support of Don's arm. She was trembling violently and the feeling of tension that had been there earlier this evening was with her again. She dreaded stepping inside the house; had she been able to she would have turned and ran. Don and she had pretended the chapter was closed, but she realized now that she'd known all along it wasn't closed, not yet. She had to brace herself to cross the threshold, to enter Miss Mitford's living room with its old-fashioned, gloomy furniture and cluttered as it was with nick-nacs.

The lieutenant was short, a suave, delicate looking man. He was smoking a cigarette in a black holder.

"Mr. Donald Wakefield? Miss Emily Chisolm? You're tenants here?" he asked quietly.

Don nodded. "What's all this about, Lieutenant?"

"I'll tell you and then I'll have to take statements from both of you," his voice was quiet and unemotional. "Miss Mitford has been arrested and charged with the murder of a Gwen Farraday. I understand she was the last tenant in the apartment you have, Miss Chisolm."

"With her murder?" Emily whispered. She said sharply,

"But that was all explained, Lieutenant. I mean the hand came from a skeleton Mrs. Watkins son uses. He's a medical student."

The lieutenant shook his head slowly. "The hand didn't come off the skeleton young Watkins has in his room. Mrs. Watkins discovered that when she took it back. That was one reason she telephoned us; also the fact that she was suspicious about a supposed telephone conversation Miss Mitford had with the dead girl in your apartment earlier this evening. She was pretty sure she saw Miss Mitford's finger pressed on the plunger all through that conversation." He went on, "Incidentally, we checked that call. It was for you, Miss Chisolm, from a Mr. Clingford inviting you on his wife's behalf to spend some days with them in the country. He told us that what the woman who answered the phone said didn't make sense, and then abruptly he was cut off. He thought you must have given him the wrong number."

"What else have you found out, Lieutenant?" Don cleared his throat.

The lieutenant took a fresh cigarette from his pocket and put it in his holder. "We found Miss Farraday's remains buried deeply in a corner of the yard. We were able to locate the spot because the dog had been digging there. That's where he found the hand. I let the dog out of the house and he began digging again in the same place. That broke Miss Mitford. She screamed at us and the dog to leave the girl in peace. We were desecrating her grave, she said." He sighed. "There was nothing new in the story she told us afterwards. She seemed glad to tell it. Apparently she'd had a violent row with Miss Farraday to whom she says she was devoted, something about going up to your apartment, Mr. Wakefield." He looked at Don with a thin, sour smile. "It must have been a pretty hysterical scene for she picked up a china lamp and threw it at the girl's head. The lamp caught Miss Farraday on the temple and killed her. Miss Mitford got into a panic and at first she tried to dismember the body, she'd been a hospital nurse at one stage in her career I gather, but it isn't easy to dismember a body and all she managed to do was to cut off one wrist. Finally she buried the body and the hand. I shouldn't say," he paused slightly, "that mentally she has been completely normal for some time past." He had spoken in a concise, unemotional voice as though he had been describing an ordinary everyday incident, but to Emily there was nothing ordinary about it, she felt violently, physically sick.

"Would you mind if I went upstairs? I don't feel well," she whispered.

"That's all right." He smiled thinly but his eyes were sympathetic. "I can take your statement later. We'll be here most of the night."

Emily and Don sat in the two deep armchairs in her apartment and watched the dawn come slowly through the curtains.

At some time during the long waiting period in which they'd talked spasmodically there had been a tentative scratching at the door and she'd let Timo in. He had come in and curled quietly up on the rug at her feet as though at last he were accepting her. Poor dog, he found her at last, she thought.

The daylight strengthened. Don switched off the electric lights and drew the curtains, but he didn't look out into the yard. He came back and stood with his hands in his pockets, his back to the empty grate. "What are you going to do, Emily?" he asked finally.

"I thought of visiting the Clingfords for the few days they've invited me. When I come back I'll move into a hotel until I can find another apartment." Despite herself she shivered.

"I'll have to find another apartment too," he said speaking slowly as though having reached an important decision. "It will mean moving the lab, but I agree we couldn't stay on here." Again he moved towards the window and again he avoided looking out. "That lieutenant seems to think I'm a sort of wolf," he said, turning back towards her with a faint wry smile. "But I'm not, Emily. I'm a lonely person, a little complicated, I think. I've never known a girl I could talk to easily, a girl with whom I felt so much at home as I do with you. We haven't known each other long but tonight we've got to know each other pretty well, don't you agree? Supposing when I'm looking for an apartment I look for one that might hold the two of us if later on you cared to entertain the thought of marrying me? It's just an idea, of course," he added diffidently.

She looked up at him, her heart was swelling but she didn't smile. Her hand dropped down and she fondled Timo's woolly head. She schooled both her voice and her expression.

"Yes, it's an idea," she returned quietly. "But when you're looking for an apartment please make sure they don't mind dogs," she said.

betrayal of the hopeless

by . . . John Creasey

THERE can be no greater tragedy than for a man to be hated by his son. For a good father it carries a daily hurt, thrusting deeper each day. So it was with Baburao Munshi, my oldest friend in Bombay. I say friend, but we were closer than that or I would not be able to tell this story of how his son Krishna hated him, and how they fought each other. It was not a physical struggle; I have never heard of a Hindu laying a hand upon his own father. It was a war of attrition.

When I first saw Baburao, I thought he was a beggar. I hadn't been in Bombay long enough to tell the difference between the simply poor and the destitute, between the man who works and the man whose work is begging.

I was twenty-three at the time, and had come from England to assist an aging Irishman who represented several large English publishing houses. I loved books and wanted to trade in them.

It was soon after that when nightmare came. Even the gutters were crammed with the sleeping, often dying victims.

John Creasey, prominent British writer, rotarian and member of the Liberal Party is slowing down. Author, under nine different pen-names (at the last count) of more than 300 novels, Creasey (who is better known in this country for his Inspector West novels, published by Harper's) *is now writing only 12 to 15 novels a year. The present story, set against the background of partition-days India, is as old as India—and as fresh as tomorrow's headlines.*

One January morning a softening haze spread over the unrippled water of the harbor, so that the white sails of small yachts and the dark sails of native boats and Arab dhows were etched against the serene blue of sky and sea, I walked from my hotel, near Apollo Bunder. Across the road, the Gateway of India stood dark and massive.

Most of the beggars, the itinerant chiropodist with his little black case, the sellers of foreign stamps and crude postcards, knew and did not accost me. Two tiny boys, black hair long and matted, faces filthy, bodies clothed in rags, each thrust a hand in front of me, rubbed a thin stomach, and chanted: "Me no eat, me no eat, me no eat." I dropped a pice onto each palm and they beamed and bobbed and hurried off.

As I walked to the sea-wall, to watch the shapes emerging from the haze, I saw a Hindu about my own age, a few yards away. He was very slim, with rather sharp features, and had the familiar, drawn look of hunger. His jacket had once been black but was now green and shiny, with holes at the elbows and one shoulder. His dhoti was tied round his waist and pulled up between his legs, looking like a pair of loose fitting pantaloons. It was snowy white, like the twist of turban.

He moved towards me, carrying a few picture postcards. Obviously he was too diffident to have much success importuning tourists.

He held the postcards out and spoke in better English than most.

"Sahib want postcards?"

I didn't, really. They were cheap pictures of the Gateway, Bombay Castle, the Rajabai Tower, the Hanging Gardens. He didn't speak again but his eyes talked eloquently, fine clear brown eyes, at once proud and appealing in that hungry face. I thrust my hand into my pocket, and the first note I pulled out was a 5-rupee. I gave it to him.

He hesitated, almost embarrassed. "I cannot change, Sahib."

"Never mind the change," I said, and took half-a-dozen of the postcards. "Thanks. Good luck."

When I hurried away, I wondered whether I had been a fool, whether he would pester me every morning. I found myself expecting him next day, but he wasn't there.

He did not appear for several weeks, but when he did, I recognized him on the instant; a remarkable fact, since every day I saw thousands of men dressed like him.

The Irishman had gone home on leave and I had been

extremely busy. The staff was well-trained, Hindus and Anglo-Indians who worked conscientiously, and I was planning a long trip, north to Delhi and across to Calcutta, to meet customers whom I hadn't yet seen.

On the day before I left, I saw Baburao.

He was selling newspapers at a corner of Phiroshah Mehta Street, near the little hole-in-the-wall shops which offered everything from a needle-and-thread to a tiger skin. I bought a paper. Obviously he recognized me, but neither of us spoke.

A month later, I came back from a long, wearisome, dusty, harassing trip by train with enough orders in my pocket to make it worthwhile. Baburao was at the same corner, dressed exactly the same; but he had added to his stock. As well as newspapers there were a dozen or so thin paper books.

Books always loosen my tongue.

"Hallo," I said. "Going into the book trade?"

"That is so, Sahib."

"When you run out of stock, come and see what I have," I said, and told him where my office was.

He gave a little, secret smile. "I know well where it is, Sahib. Thank you."

About a month after this I was sitting in my office, with the door open and the fans whirring; the April heat was as oppressive as a blast from a brick kiln, for the rains hadn't broken.

I looked up and saw Baburao. He looked hot and damp, but as always, his clothes were clean if old. And the hungry look was gone. There was something else different, too—he looked as if he were lit up by a flame that sprang from great joy.

"Good morning, Baburao," I greeted, "how are you?"

"Today is a great day, Mr. Graham, for my first-born is a boy."

"I'm delighted," I said. "May it be the first of many!"

"It will be," said Baburao confidently. "There will be many mouths to fill, and so I must increase my business. That is another reason why I am here. I wish to sell more books. I think that I could sell some of these." His gaze roamed round my shelves. "I would like to try, sir."

He was implying that he could not afford to buy stock, and wanted credit but would never ask for it.

"Look round, select what you want, and I will send you a bill in a month's time," I said. "If you want me to take any back, please protect them against the weather." I had an eye on the coming rains.

"That is already done," said Baburao. "When I have select-

ed and arranged them, you will see. Thank you." He wasn't surprised by my offer, but was pleased. He left with a carton of books, mostly paper-backs but with a few cloth-bound volumes. I wished he hadn't been so ambitious, for these were likely to get dirty. But obviously he was confident. At the end of the day I went out into the street, where he was squatting by his stand.

He had built a kind of bookcase with a wide, overhanging top, against the wall of the stone building where he had his pitch. It was on the right side of the road, where the rain, when it came, was likely to be blown the other way; he also had a canvas canopy.

"You're really working at this," I said with admiration. "It looks fine. Good luck!"

"Thank you, Mr. Graham."

"By the way," I said, "what is the name of your first born?"

"Krishna," Baburao told me. "Krishna Munshi."

There was joy in his eyes. Then.

I was astonished when Baburao appeared next morning, selected three cloth-bound books and several paper-backs, took these to the trade counter and paid in cash. I went to find out what he'd bought.

"Repeats of titles he took before," said Mary Lewis, my counter-clerk, a bright, business-like Anglo-Indian with a very fair skin. "He wanted three others, but we're out of stock."

That night I noticed that his shelves were packed so tightly that he couldn't squeeze another book in. I mingled with the colorful, noisy crowd of home-going clerks, and watched. Baburao sold two books while I was there and promptly replaced them from a wooden box, which he used afterwards as a chair.

He came for a little stock most days, always repeating popular titles, and gradually built up a steady business. He improved the appearance of his stand but never his clothes. He paid in cash for everything he bought, but nothing off the first bill.

Mary Lewis told me she had put it into his hand, but he had blandly ignored it.

"Don't worry," I said, "he'll pay one day."

My interest stimulated by Baburao's great pride in his son, I began to understand the strength of family loyalty, with its always fanatical influence, and to respect the Hindu's love for his first-born. Whenever I asked about Krishna, I was told he was strong, healthy and just the son to take over his father's business one day!

That was Baburao's dream.

By Krishna's first birthday the bookstand was twice its original size and Baburao had to

step onto a stool to reach the top row. He was turning over several thousand rupees a month, not big money by Western standards but impressive for a Hindu who had started from nothing.

As I became more familiar with Indian ways and customs, I learned that Baburao was of high caste, had come to Bombay with a flood of refugees from a famine area, and now lived in a shelter against an old wall of a dismantled building. The roof and walls were of banana fronds, his wife cooked on bricks outside the tiny entrance, and washed their clothes on the stones at the water's edge nearby. Hundreds of thousands lived like them in poverty which bred fatalism and despair—but in Baburao, hope.

Mary Lewis reminded me of Krishna's next birthday, and added tartly that although he paid cash for everything he bought now, Baburao hadn't paid that first bill! I ought to remind him, she said. I went into the street to congratulate him and Krishna, and caught him stepping down from the box—not with a book but a hammer in his hand. Above the stand was a painted sign:

BABURAO MUNSHI & SON
Books

I didn't speak about that old account.

Three months or so later he told me that his second son, Rama, had been born. He was pleased but not overjoyed.

He was changing in some ways, and had become a brisk, confident businessman with a flare for knowing which books would sell. He acquired many regular customers and ran accounts for them. Hindu, Moslem, Sikh, Parsee and Europeans, students, businessmen and clerks, all patronized him, and Baburao made friends with them all.

His English was now almost perfect. He dressed a little better but it was noticeable that whenever he needed an assistant, he took him from the refugee camps. There were more and more fugitives from troubles in the north, and from famine areas.

Just before Krishna's third birthday, Baburao asked me to have lunch with him. We went to an ordinary little restaurant in Hornby Road, not far from Crawford Market. With its rioting colors and contrasts, its variety of tiny shops, the insistent pleading of the sidewalk pedlars and the beggars, the Chinese with their paper and celluloid lanterns and toys, the district always fascinated me.

The food, served in little metal bowls and eaten with the fingers, was spicy and sweet.

"Mr. Graham, I will be grateful for your advice," Baburao said when we had finished. "I wish to open another stall, or shop. I wish to employ one or two men who are not ignorant of books and who can be trusted. You can tell me of those who are not ignorant, and I will judge their loyalty." He smiled at me, modestly. "You do not think I am foolish?"

"No," I said dryly. "You must treat each son alike! I think I could recommend one or two men, but there's something I ought to have said to you long ago, Baburao."

His smile was gentle. "That old bill, perhaps?"

"I shall leave that to your conscience! No, it's about your business. You buy all your books from me, and I represent only a few English publishers. You should buy from the other agencies in Bombay, and stock books which have a ready sale."

He leaned across the little table and touched my arm.

"You are generous and a good friend, Mr. Graham. Perhaps I will do that. I do not think you will sell less, because of it. Now *I* will tell you something. *I* am making a book." He was obviously highly amused. "It will be a big book, and when it is finished I shall give it to you. All the time I work on it, I remind myself of some postcards on the Apollo Bunder, and also of the day when you first allowed me credit. What is the phrase?—a labor of love."

"Don't be too long finishing it," I said.

"Look forward to the day when Krishna begins to work with me," he answered.

I had begun to absorb something of the Hindu attitude to time, too, and I knew that Bombay would hold me for all my life. The passing pageant of brilliant color and squalid life; the wail of the beggars; the reluctant briskness of horses drawing the victorias, the wilful carelessness of pedestrians and motorists on the road, the bustle and the serenity, the beauty of the temples, the mastery of the priest over his flock, the outwardly slavish subjection to Krishna which wasn't slavish at all, the beauty of minds tuned to contemplation of life beyond normal understanding—all these now fascinated me.

Baburao was only one of many I came to know, to like and to admire. I had many friends. As the years passed the political storm developed with increasing animosity towards the British, but no one troubled or harassed me.

It was at a period of great crisis, when Gandhi was at the height of his powers, that I met Baburao and Krishna near

Crawford Market. The boy was nearly ten. I had never taken to him, but exerted myself to be friendly.

"Hullo, Krishna," I said, after greeting his father. "How are you?"

He stared at me with great, dark eyes; and he said slowly and deliberately:

"Bloody Englishman."

The pain in Baburao's eyes gave me my first hint of his tragedy. It was a long time before I realized the truth; that his son had been born evil, as Baburao had been born good.

Nevertheless, Baburao was flourishing.

He had moved from the banana frond hut, first into an apartment and then into a big, rambling old bungalow near the Museum. Occasionally I spent an evening there, but the atmosphere was never really happy. Krishna, young though he was, spoiled it by sitting and staring at me as if in contempt. So more often, Baburao came to me.

He no longer needed advice about books; he had five shops and as many stands, and was one of the biggest booksellers in the city. Practically all of his assistants came from the refugee camps, and he spent much time and money in relief work. He told me that his wife helped him in this, but the small, smooth-skinned, sari-clad woman was to me only a shadow.

The eternal refugee problem had become enormous, and the government seemed to be powerless. Baburao and other voluntary workers were swamped by the hordes of hungry, homeless refugees. Baburao was now a highly successful businessman and a landowner, and he spent a great deal of his fortune on the relief work. He was philosophical about it, and the only time I really saw him angry was when he discovered dope-peddlars busy in a camp. The hungry and the hopeless were easy victims of dope-traffickers, and money desperately needed for food, clothes and children was spent on the vile stuff, which gave an illusion of happiness and yet sent men to hell.

Baburao's mood always became brittle whenever the subject of dope came up.

On a February evening, soon after Krishna's fifteenth birthday, I went to dine at Baburao's house. The boy stood staring at me from an upstairs window. There was still light, and his face was striking. Even at a distance I could see the defiance in his eyes, an arrogance which mocked his youth.

That night, Krishna was allowed to dine with us.

His manners were perfect and his English good, undoubtedly his mind was developed far

beyond his years. Without saying a word, he managed to tell me that he still disliked me. Worse, he seemed to be contemptuous of his father, and coldly indifferent to his mother.

"Malcolm," Baburao said, when we were alone, "I have to apologize to you about the book I am making. It is still not ready, but I promise you that one day it will be."

It was soon after that when nightmare came. Partition. Hordes of refugees turned out of Pakistan strained the resources of Bombay and brought a plague of disease and despair. It was like an explosion. Railway stations, government buildings, schools, yes even the gutters, were crammed with sleeping, often dying victims. The ghats were fed with a steady stream of bodies for burning.

It was horror.

Day after day Baburao worked until he dropped.

Then, Krishna was working in the business, and showed his remarkable maturity by taking his father's place when Baburao was out on relief work. He was studiously polite to me, but I was sure that his dislike was as bitter as ever. His eyes still had a burning defiance which mingled with arrogance. Against his father's wishes he had given up the dhoti—which Baburao always wore—for Western clothes.

Rama, the second boy, was very different. Willing, eager and gay, he made up in friendliness what he lacked in experience. I came to know him well enough to ask him:

"What doesn't Krishna like about me, Rama?"

The boy hesitated before answering quickly.

"It is not you alone, Mr. Graham. It is any friend of our father."

Then, he went on to talk freely, worriedly. Krishna was bitter and aloof with his father, he had a cruel streak, and loved to hurt—animals, insects, his brother, his servants. Rama gave depth to the picture I had always imagined of Krishna. I feared—well, I don't know what I feared for Baburao.

I did not fear the worst, but it came.

Remember how Baburao worked among the poor. Remember how he adopted the cause of the hordes of starving, frightened Hindus who fled from Pakistan when the Mahommedans raised the sword with frightening vengeance. Remember that he labored to help the millions of victims in the famine areas, when the rice crops failed.

Remember how he would take lads from the pitiful homes of sticks and reeds and banana fronds, and train them

until they could work for him and so help their families?

Remember, too, how hunger and sickness spread through the ranks of the refugees, defeating all efforts to restrict it until death and deformity took a dreadful toll; and how thousands found relief in drugs which would one day drive them mad.

Think of him as the father of Krishna.

Imagine Krishna coming into the firm of *Baburao Munshi and Son* and watched by his father with painful hope that he would not fail and, if you can, imagine the steady rising of hope as Krishna proved his brilliance. In business, more and more was left to him. While Baburao worked for the refugees, his son became master of the complex working of a firm with thirty branches, mostly in Bombay but some in Delhi, Calcutta and Madras. His father could take pride in him, yet be afraid.

One evening Baburao came to me, relaxed in a long chair, and watched me drink my whiskey —he neither drank nor smoked. Obviously he was happier than he had been for a long, long time, and I felt reassured.

"I think I shall be able to finish the book before long," he told me. "I shall soon have more time. A miracle is happening, Malcolm. At last Krishna has seen what urges me to work for the poor. You will never guess what he has started to do."

"I won't try," I said.

"Imagine this, then—he has started libraries! Traveling libraries, which go to the camps and lend books to those who can read. Malcolm—" Baburao sat up, almost excited, "you know and I know that the greatest evil we have to fight is that of drugs. Can the people be blamed for taking refuge in them when their life is such a misery? Can they?"

"We've agreed about that before," I said, "but how does Krishna's new idea affect that?"

"But it is obvious! Those who can will read aloud to their families, there will be something new to fill their minds, a fresh interest, a great distraction. First a few and gradually many will be wooed away from drugs. Many who would start taking them will never do so. Why, this could be the weapon to attack illiteracy, to begin a thirst for knowledge!"

I had never seen him so pleased—and oddly, I had never been filled with such disquiet. Krishna saw money in his traveling libraries, of course, and if they failed—

I could not say a word to spoil Baburao's dream.

Soon afterwards I was called unexpectedly to London, and was away for two months. I would have stayed longer, but

a letter from a mutual friend in Bombay worried me.

"Baburao looks as if he is going mad," he wrote. "He hasn't said a word to any of us, but I'm sure he would talk to you."

I flew back to Bombay.

Within an hour Baburao was with me—looking old and broken and with the shadow of dread in his eyes.

"But what is it?" I demanded. "What's done all this?"

"It is Krishna," he said brokenly. "It is my first-born, born also of the devil."

He could hardly bring himself to tell me the truth—that Krishna was using the traveling libraries, the book stands and some of the shops, for distributing cocaine and heroin to the people of the crowded camps.

Baburao had proof, and Krishna admitted it.

Baburao walked about the big room in my bungalow, touching this, touching that, not knowing what he was doing, talking as if to a second self; and in despair.

"Can you suggest one thing to do? Just one thing? Understand, that he, my son, has betrayed not only me but everything I love and work for. He is feeding the hopeless with a false hope, he is feeding them with dreams and when they come out of the dream they will rob and pillage and go through hell to find more money and pour it into *his* pockets. He knows it, and glories in it. He hates me. Understand, Malcolm, he hates me, he has no shame. He sees me just as a sentimental fool.

"Help me, Malcolm," Baburao begged. "Tell me what I must do."

I could find nothing to say.

He stood still at last, gazing down at me, and I wished I could not see into his eyes.

"You say nothing, but you think much—and I know what you think," he said. "That I can defeat this by going to the police. I can betray my son as he has betrayed me." He clenched his fists. "They are the thoughts in your mind, Malcolm, admit it."

I said slowly, painfully: "Yes, Baburao. You would spend a fortune hounding down anyone else who did this. Will you let Krishna undo everything that you and others have done?"

He whispered: "He is my son. I cannot betray my son."

The hurt went almost as deep with me as with him, but I had to say:

"The one certain thing is that you must stop it, now. Not soon—but now."

He didn't answer me, but looked as if he could bear no more. I took him home. I was terrified of what he might do,

and warned Rama and the other son that he might write to the police, give them the proof of Krishna's infamy, and kill himself. The sons must prevent that.

"We shall watch all the time, Mr. Graham," Rama promised.

I turned away and walked blindly towards the gate, and as I reached it, another car pulled up. Light from a street lamp fell on Krishna's face.

He watched me, gloating. I could strike him, and it would be senseless. I could shout at him and it would add to his sadistic triumph. But I could not go away without trying to hurt him.

I asked: "Why?"

He said: "I am myself and he is himself."

"I am his friend," I said, "and I can do what he cannot—I can go to the police."

Krishna's expression did not change.

"Go to them, by all means. They will find that everything I have done has been approved—by my father. Without reading them, he has signed many letters which I have placed before him, and so I have made sure that he cannot drag me down without dragging himself down. I am going to tell him that now. Be good enough to let me pass."

I waited outside, when he had gone.

There would be awful despair when he faced his father, and I did not believe that Baburao's wife, or Rama, or his other son could help. So I had to go to Baburao. I went back to the house and rang the bell, and waited for a long time before the door opened.

Rama stood there.

"Mr.—Graham." His voice was hoarse and frightened. "They are together, now."

"I'll go in," I said. "Tell no one."

He stood aside. Baburao's room was on the left of a narrow hall, and there was a light under the door. I heard voices as I opened the door softly, and stepped in.

Baburao and his first-born were at one side of the room, six feet or so apart, facing each other. They were joined in a battle which the younger man was certain he would win.

The room was large, with three fine tapestries draping the walls, cushions on a parquet polished floor, low tables, chairs which were used only when Europeans visited the house. Along one side were books; had I looked, I would have seen the big book. Above the books were photographs of Baburao, his wife and his children.

Baburao echoed the question I had asked in a voice so quiet that I thought his spirit was already dead.

"You have not told me why, my son?"

"I am myself and you are yourself, that is why," Krishna said. "You believe in men and I believe in cattle. You waste your mind and money in a surfeit of compassion, attempting the impossible task of making men out of beasts. I see brutes there only to serve me. But I am not here to talk of motives." He had no motive, he was badness. How does one explain badness? "I tell you again that if you go to the police, you will bring ruin on yourself. It is done so that both of us must be free or both must be damned. Perhaps you will spare a little compassion for yourself." How savagely that was meant to hurt! "There is no way out, and you will do as I do."

His voice held no expression, he was so sure of himself. As they stood there, Krishna in Western clothes, his father in his long black jacket and dhoti, they looked strangely alike.

"So there is no way out," said Baburao, and he smiled.

Nothing that had gone before had shocked me so much, for there was no tension in the smile. Instead, he looked as if a great relief both warmed and soothed him. He puzzled Krishna, too, as he tensed himself.

"Therefore I shall not seek a way out," went on Baburao, quietly. "You are right my son. I have wasted too much energy on attempting the impossible. I shall not do that again." He moved, turning away from me, and neither knew that I was there. He went to a low table by the books and picked up the telephone, standing erect and smiling at Krishna.

Krishna moved, and his voice lost its calm. "What are you doing?"

"Can you not guess?" asked Baburao softly. "I am calling the police, my son. I could not and would not betray you alone, but I can confess *for both of us*. We have never really been together, but we shall be together now. Your crime is mine from now on; my punishment will also be yours."

For a moment, Krishna was stunned to silence. So was I. But the sublime expression on Baburao's face could not last; exaltation would surely die.

Then Krishna moved.

"Come away!" He went forward, hand outstretched, shouting. "You old fool, that won't help either you or me, it—"

"I would like to talk to Mr. Patel—the Mr. Patel in the Unlawful Drugs Division, please," Baburao said into the telephone. "Tell him that—"

Krishna reached out and wrenched the telephone away, but I moved, too. I struck Krishna a blow that knocked him off his feet, sent him crashing

against the bookcase and falling onto the floor. It was a golden moment.

Baburao recognized me as he backed away in alarm. He began to smile again, retrieved the telephone and said:

"*You* won't try to stop me, Malcolm."

"I won't stop you," I said. "Just go ahead."

I told the police what Baburao and Krishna had said to me; that was easy. I made Rama and another son break the vow of silence that their father had imposed on them; that was with the help of priests, and was much more difficult. But perhaps my only true victory, won without help and over the mind of a man, was in my struggle with Baburao. I broke through the barrier of his absurd but noble folly, and when he came to trial his plea was "not guilty"; so was the verdict of the jury.

There was no mercy for his son, and no grief except in the secret places.

Outwardly, Baburao looked much older, but also more serene. I was never quite sure that he knew peace, and even wondered if he felt that I had made him betray himself, until the day, not long ago, when he brought the book. I doubt if he will ever know how I had hungered for it. It was a heavy book, bound in fine leather and with much beautiful scroll-work and heavy parchment pages. Without speaking, he handed it to me, and without speaking I opened it at the first page.

Fastened to it was an old, yellowing sheet of paper; the unsettled account of many years ago. I turned the page. The next was headed: "To remind you of trust you showed without good reason." At the bottom two 100-rupee notes were fastened. Two more were on the next page, dated three months later. Two more on each succeeding page at three-month intervals, many, many thousands of rupees, with entries in Baburao's own hand, telling of some talk between us, recording the history of nearly thirty years, not only of *Baburao Munshi and Son,* but of our friendship.

The last sentence explained the years of waiting.

"This is prepared for you as a record of our abiding friendship, and of my love; and a token of the love of all my family."

time for murder

by . . . Dorothy Quick

It was dreadful to kill, but then, men like Harry deserved to be killed. . . .

RUTH stood quietely in the center of the kitchen floor. This was the time—the time for murder.

Her heart beat faster, throbbing on either side of her throat until she thought she would choke.

This was the time. It was exactly as she had planned it. For once Harry was in a good humor reading his paper happily with plenty of time before he had to catch the bus for the office. He had just asked for more coffee. If the coffee was just hot enough, he would swallow it without question, quite unaware of the deadly cyanide it contained.

She had been preparing for this for two years. The perfect crime! Two years ago, she had begun taking pictures with a Brownie. Then Harry had given her a Contax, because she took such good pictures and her pictures would help her sell his houses. Harry never did anything without a reason. She had taken the pictures for him and then she had said she'd like to do her own developing. That appealed to Harry, because it

Dorothy Quick, poet and mystery writer, describes the emotions of a wife aware the time had come to dispose of an irritating husband. She had planned carefully for this moment when a little cyanide would remove this irritation.

would save money in the long run and Harry never cared how hard anybody else worked. So she had easily come by the poison she wanted.

That accomplished, she had begun to set the stage, dropping little hints to her bridge club that Harry wasn't well. She had even told the family doctor that she was worried about Harry, that he was short-breathed, ashen gray of color with pain in his chest and left arm, all symptoms she had gotten out of a medical book.

"Heart, of course," the doctor had said. "Send Harry in to see me."

"But he won't come. I've tried for weeks to get him to call you."

"Probably some arterial pressure. No use alarming him. I'll get him to come myself."

Harry had refused, just as Ruth had known he would. He had never felt better in his life.

Ruth had continued with her little hints, her vague worries always mentioned in the right places.

She had built up enough now. The doctor would sign the death certificate "heart disease." Her friends wouldn't even be surprised. There would be no suspicion and she would be free —free—free of Harry, his cruelty to her and his meanesses which were cruel, too. The long, awful nights with Harry and his sadistic passion would be a thing of the past. All for a little white powder dropped in a coffee cup.

It was dreadful to kill, but men like Harry deserved to be killed.

She leaned over the stove and filled the two coffee cups with steaming, hot coffee. Then, letting them stand, she went to the cupboard where she had hidden the white powder that would free her of Harry. Long ago she had measured out the right amount, rolled it in a piece of Kleenex. Now she unrolled the soft, white paper, shook the white powder into the nearest coffee cup. Then she burned the Kleenex over the garbage can and stirred the contents about so there wasn't a sign of the blackened bits that had been left of the Kleenex. She washed the spoon, leaving it clean in the sink. Then she tasted her cup of coffee. It was just right to drink.

She stirred the other, so there was no sign of the white powder, rinsed and dried the spoon, put it back on the saucer. She didn't use a spoon herself.

She picked up the tray and pushed open the door into the dining room.

Harry was rapping on the table as she came in.

"You took a long time," he said as she put the cup and saucer with the spoon in front of him. "Why, Ruth, your

cheeks are flushed. You've never been more lovely."

"It's the heat from the stove," she explained as she put the other cup by her own place.

"Come here," he commanded, and when she made no move, pulled her to him down on his knees, holding her close he kissed her, a long, lingering kiss, the kind she hated. She shut her eyes to bear it better. Her lack of response didn't hinder his enjoyment, in fact, it enhanced it.

It was quite a long time before he set her free.

She went to her own place, watching him. He made no effort to touch his coffee. "Will he never drink?" she thought, "perhaps if I take some of mine it will inspire him to do likewise.

She felt the cup. "This is just right," she said and picked up the cup. She did not notice there was a spoon on the plate as she drank deep. The last thing she saw was a sardonic gleam in Harry's eyes.

The next second she was lying on the floor. Harry took the cup up carefully with his napkin over his fingers. He was careful not to touch the handle. He didn't want to disturb Ruth's fingerprints.

He rinsed the cup thoroughly, then took it back to the dining room. Ignoring his wife's body, he poured some of the good coffee into the other cup. Then he put it back on its saucer. Next he changed cups, taking them from the bottom with his protected hand. Now the cup and saucer with the teaspoon was at his place, the other at Ruth's.

Only then did he throw the napkin on the floor and push over his chair as though he had leaped up.

Next he went to the phone and dialed a number. When the connection was made, he cried, "Oh, Doctor, I'm so glad you're in. My wife has just died. She fell over at the table."

There was a silence while the doctor talked.

"She had a very bad heart when I examined her recently, there's no doubt she was very ill. Those delusions she had that you had heart trouble. When you came to me for a check-up, I'd never heard a better heart. Don't worry, I'll be right over and attend to everything."

Harry said, "Thank you," and hung up the phone.

But he lifted it off again and dialed another number.

"Myrtle," he said, "she's gone, darling."

what's new in crime

by . . . Hans Stefan Santesson

Recent essays in the somewhat less gentle arts—and some comments. . . .

AS I HAVE had occasion to previously write, there is a temptation to remember, with nostalgia, the blessed and bygone days when novels in this field were not so often essays—and at times not even literate essays—in the pathology of the abnormal and of clinically described sex-cum-sadism urges. This latter school of writing, which appears sometimes to cater to allegedly adult writers-on-walls, is sometimes misnamed "realist."

The fact that novels of protest and still other novels born out of genuine revulsion and reaction to the blood and filth of war, were a part of the literary pattern of the early twenties and of the late forties, does not excuse and does not condone the little imitators of the kick-'er-in-the-navel school. The Detective Novel—the Mystery Novel—is not to be confused with these literary exercises whose sole *raison d'etre* seem to be to supplement the tabloids' role as the soother of this generation's frustrations. The pity of it is that the existence of this somewhat more elemental school of writing obscures the existence of

Still dedicated to the premise that a certain school of writing, which shall be nameless, is not *to be confused with the field as a whole, this column again discusses some novels that will be remembered—and mysteries you should read.*

mysteries and detective novels that are genuinely distinguished novels, portraits of our times that can and will be read and read again, long after littler men are forgotten, studied as much for the clarity of their prose as for their picture of our sometimes weird and sometimes wonderful times.

Louise Crump's THE FACE OF FEAR (1954, Longman Green) was a novel like this, a study of life and *mores* in a Southern town. J. J. Marrick's GIDEON'S DAY (1955, Harper's) was a beautiful study of the methodology of detection at Scotland Yard. There was Ellery Queen's better than excellent THE GLASS VILLAGE (1954, Little Brown), a softly etched but beautiful portrait of a New England village, and there was Dorothy Salisbury Davis' superbly literate and compassionate THE GENTLE MURDERER (1951, Scribner's); Henri Catalan's first novel about the little Sister of the Poor, SOEUR ANGELE AND THE EMBARRASSED LADIES (1955, Sheed & Ward); and—in a sense—Pat Root's interesting study of a personality, THE DEVIL OF THE STAIRS (1956, Simon & Schuster).

And there is the late Josephine Tey's THE DAUGHTER OF TIME (1952, Macmillan) often called the most distinguished mystery novel of this generation.

John Dickson Carr obviously belongs in this company, not only for his mastery of the puzzle novel, but equally much so for the many hours of genuine enjoyment he, under his own name or as Carter Dickson, has given so many of us. PATRICK BUTLER FOR THE DEFENSE (Harper's, $3.50), is in this tradition, and is a delightful story built around "the foremost advocate at the Bar. They call him the 'Great Defender.' "

Patrick Butler is also called "that damned Irishman," and there is a certain amount of justification for this. Devotees of the psychoanalytical novel will undoubtedly find this novel by John Dickson Carr depressingly innocent—and so it is perhaps. But it does tell the efforts of some very likable people, including particularly Lady Pamela de Saxe, to unscramble a murder and the reasons for a murder, the efforts of dynamic Patrick Butler somewhat overshadowing the rest. . . . Recommended? Of course!

John Hamilton had known for a long time that he had created an emotional Frankenstein in his move to the country in an effort to save his marriage and to protect his wife from herself. Charming and exciting—and alcoholic—Linda Hamilton, was finding the role of the exiled martyr much too interesting.

One day Linda Hamilton is murdered, and John (in Patrick Quentin's THE MAN IN THE NET, Simon & Schuster, $2.75) faces a fantastic fight to prove his innocence.

Talking of fast moving stories —hold it! Scott Jordan is back! Harold Q. Masur's TALL, DARK AND DEADLY (Simon & Schuster, $2.75), has much of the tempo that distinguished Masur's earlier novels. Fast moving and exciting, the present account of Scott Jordan's efforts to prove that he *hadn't* been involved in a fraudulent divorce case is top-flight escape reading. Possibly middle-aged glamor novelists such as McIver do exist; on second thought, they *do* of course. Possibly glamorous dancing teachers—with side lines—like Denise Howard, do exist. Yes, undoubtedly they do. But whether or not you know such people, TALL, DARK AND DEADLY *is* recommended by this sedate column.

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the easy mark

by . . . V. E. Thiessen

PAPA SCHULTZ had his back to the butcher shop door when the dark-haired man came in. Papa's short, fat body was bent over the slicer so that the morning sunlight, penetrating through the side window, touched the shine on his bald spot, a shine made more intense by the application of *DOCTOR FRIEND'S HAIR TONIC—guaranteed to grow hair.* Papa Schultz heard the door close and he turned and waddled to the counter.

"You would like some of the salami, ja?" he asked.

The dark man shook his head. "No, Schultzie, I would like the money for the Merchants Protective Association. You forgot to pay last week."

"Ja!" Papa Schultz bobbed his head. "I spoke with my nephew, Heinrich, about this, and he said you were a bunch of gangsters and I should pay you nothing."

"Your nephew Heinrich is going to get you into a lot of trouble, Schultzie. You better listen to me . . . ."

The dark young man grinned. Papa did not like the grin. He thought it was like—it was like—he had not quite decided what it was like when the tremendous crash of broken glass stopped

Papa Schultz did not like the dark young man's grin. There was something evil about that grin, as there was something evil about the Merchants Protective Association that he represented. A story straight out of tomorrow's headlines.

his thinking. The counter in front of the dark young man was splintered into shreds.

"The glass!" Papa Schultz felt his flabby cheeks quiver in indignation. "The glass! You broke it yet? And the meat inside all ruined with broken glass. The steak! The salami! And the prices now so high!"

The dark-haired man's smile twisted with amusement. "Go on and cry, Schultzie. Cry over the broken glass in the meat. But now you've had a chance to think it over, don't you think you'd better make that contribution?"

Papa quivered all over now. "You are a-a—a hoodlum," he said. "My nephew, Heinrich, was right about you. I will give you nothing."

The dark-haired man's smile slid off his face like water off an oiled surface. "Your nephew Heinrich is going to get you into a lot of trouble, Schultzie. You better listen to me instead of this young punk nephew of yours."

Papa Schultz was shocked. "Heinrich is a good boy," he protested. "He would not tell me wrong. You do not know my Heinrich, or you would not say such things. Now you get out of my store—you—you hoodlum, you!"

Dark eyes glared. "I'll be back, Schultzie, back to collect!" The man turned away.

Papa watched until the visitor had vanished, and then he picked up the phone. He would have to talk to Heinrich about this. He hoped Heinrich was not out on the street somewhere, so that he could talk. He found him, luckily, and still indignant, poured out the story of the broken glass showcase. After a time Papa Schultz began to listen, because he knew Heinrich would know what to do.

"Ja," he said. "I will do that. I will put up a solid front and see if they are bluffing. I will do that. And you will keep in touch?"

He hung up the telephone, feeling better; then he bent forward and extracted a small bottle, a green squat bottle, shaped much as he was shaped. From this he shook twenty drops of liquid and massaged them into his bald spot. Three times a day, the label said. Then Papa Schultz waddled back to the counter and began to clean up the mess of glass and ruined meat.

Three days later, dark eyes came back, but this time he was not alone. A big, red-faced man, and a highschoolish, yellow-haired kid were with him. The dark-haired man spoke first.

"Glad to see you're alone, Schultzie. You got the money for us?"

Papa Schultz eyed them. "I got no money," he said stub-

bornly. He saw the red-faced man and the boy start around the end of the counter. The dark man didn't come around. He just put one hand on the frame of the counter and came over, where there was a low spot between the glass showcases. He reminded Schultz of the tiger at the zoo.

Then, before Papa Schultz had time to blink, the dark-haired man had hit him in the pit of the stomach. It was a staggering blow, deep through the layers of fat, and Papa bent forward with fire in his middle, and a great sense of anger. As he bent forward he glimpsed *DOCTOR FRIEND'S* squat green bottle, and clutched it in one stubby hand.

He reeled away, and as the dark man came toward him again, he crashed the bottle against his head. The dark man fell on the floor back of the counter. Papa Schultz took a deep breath and rushed to meet the other two before they could come around the counter. He held the bottle neck, jagged edges of broken glass before him, just like he had read it was done in saloon fights. At the counter he pulled up sharp. The young yellow-haired kid was pointing a gun at him, his eyes as blank as butcher paper, and the red-faced man was slipping on a pair of metal knuckles.

"Don't move, Dutchie," the kid said softly. "Don't make a sound!"

But Papa let out a great yell. He was surprised that the sound came out, when he was so frightened of the gun. The red-faced man yelled, "Damn!" reached across the counter and slapped the metal knuckles into the side of Schultz's head. Papa Schultz reeled back. The red-faced man said, "We're gonna teach you what happens when you don't pay protection." He started around the counter, but he was stopped this time by the sound of a police whistle and uniforms in the door. The red-faced man and the kid jumped for the back door, and disappeared. Three uniformed policemen rushed after them. Schultz gasped. "Wait, wait, here is another one yet." But they were gone. With the suddenness of a Punch and Judy show the whole set of hoodlums and cops were gone—except, of course for the dark man still on the floor. He stirred, in a few minutes he would be conscious.

Papa Schultz frowned. The police would be back, but not soon enough. He went back of the shop and returned with some sausage casings, testing them with his hands. They seemed strong enough. He bent over the man on the floor, tying feet and hands tightly with the sausage casings. Then, anchoring him to a post that held up the

ceiling, he was finished when the man's movement indicated he was conscious.

Papa Schultz glared at him. "So—you hoodlum. You will go around hitting people in the stomach. My nephew Heinrich said you must work for another hoodlum, and I would need to know who that was before I could do anything. So, now you tell me, ja?"

"What in the devil? Why should I tell you, Schultzie?"

Papa Schultz looked around the shop. A hoodlum like this would understand only violence, he thought. And beneath the violence he would probably be only a coward. Maybe if he threatened violence this man would talk. Papa Schultz shuddered at the thought. But he bent over the counter and brought out a long salami. He said, "See! Hoodlum!" Then he put the salami through the slicing machine, cutting several thin slices. He turned back to the man on the floor.

"Now, Hoodlum. What if I do this to your fingers tied behind your back behind the post there? Would you like that, Hoodlum?"

"You're bluffing, Schultzie."

Schultz struggled and lifted the slicing machine to the floor behind the man. He had just set the machine down at the hoodlum's back when the man said in a weary voice, "No use to bother with the bluff, Schultzie. I work for Larry Legs. A lot of people can tell you that."

"And how can I prove he is the one that collects protection from poor merchants?"

"You can't, Schultzie. And you can't make him forget this either."

Papa Schultz went on with the preparations. Now he had only to move one of the fingers into position in the slicer. He shuddered again, quivering all over like his body was made of gelatin. He knew he could not place the hoodlum's hand on the slicing machine, even as a bluff. He walked around the man, with the salami still in his hand. Knowing he could not hurt the man, angry at his own softness, the anger boiled out of him in one flashing burst of passion.

"Hoodlum! Verdamt hoodlum!" He swung the sausage and it slapped against the dark man's cheek with a dull violence. Shock twisted the dark man's face and now suddenly fear came into his eyes. He cried, "Salami, sausage casings, slicing machines. I believe you'd do anything, you old devil. Larry Legs keeps his papers in a safe, a secret wall safe in his house on the West side. Now, you take that salami and slicing machine over there and work on Larry."

Papa Schultz wagged his head.

He waddled to the telephone and dialed. "Heinrich," he said gently, "I have that hoodlum here. He works for Larry Legs, and he says the records are at his house in a secret wall safe."

Papa Schultz listened for a moment.

Then he turned back to the dark man. "Heinrich says no matter where the safe is hidden they can find it. They are getting out a search warrant yet.

The dark-haired man stared—"Search warrant—Heinrich?"

"Ja. You are new here, you do not know my nephew, Heinrich. Ten years yet he has been on the police force."

The dark man stared at him a moment, then shook his head. "Schultzie," he said somberly, "you can bet your last stick of salami that I didn't know him."

Papa Schultz smiled gently and began to pick up the broken bits of *DOCTOR FRIEND'S* tonic bottle. One of the bottle fragments had a few drops of liquid left, and he shook this gently over his scalp, massaging the fluid. What with the ruined salami and the prices like they were a man had to save all he could.

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mr. heed didn't gamble

by . . . Dal Stivens

"I SUPPOSE you wouldn't change your mind?" asked the junior partner of Heed and Freshman. The senior partner shook his head vigorously.

"Well, it's a pity," said Mr. Freshman. "I shall have to proceed with my plan and kill you. It would have been easier for both of us if you had changed your mind."

"You can do as you wish and be damned to you!" said Mr. Heed. "Only be merciful and get it over."

Slim, swift Mr. Freshman frowned. He stroked the ends of an assertive moustache while looking at fat Mr. Heed who was expertly bound to his office chair with several strands of aerial wire. Mr. Heed's wrists were deftly pinioned behind him with several more strands of aerial wire. His round bald head glistened with anger under the electric light.

"'Pon my soul, Joe, you puzzle me!" said Mr. Freshman. "You don't want to die at all but you won't come in with me."

"I know my duty to our shareholders, even if you don't," said Mr. Heed, hotly.

"I suppose you wouldn't change your mind?" asked the junior partner. . . .

The senior partner admitted he was not a gambler. He hadn't liked the gleam in his junior partner's eyes, of late, so he had *taken certain precautions. . . .*

"Little thanks they'll give you, or ever have for that matter," said Mr. Freshman. "You ought to wake up to yourself, Joe."

"My ideas of waking you would never include robbing them of £15,000 of their money," said Mr. Heed.

"I feared they wouldn't," said Mr. Freshman. "That's why I took the precaution of—of organizing you as you are now. However, time steals away. To work."

Mr. Freshman put the automatic in his pocket and took up the jimmy. He began smashing open cupboards and drawers in the office of the senior partner. He emptied papers and files over the floor.

"I must make it look a convincing outside robbery," he explained.

Mr. Heed shuddered.

The junior partner broke off his labors.

"You know, Joe, I might as well tell you now, there are several things about you I detest," he said. "One of them is your fussiness over files. It has been torture working with you. The other thing is your cautiousness, timidity even. You are always anticipating the worst and trying to guard against every eventuality."

"That's sound business practice," defended Mr. Heed.

"Not to me, it isn't," said Mr. Freshman. "You can spend most of your energy guarding against eventualities that never happen." He gestured round the office. "Cabinet after cabinet choked with the files for thirty years just in case we have to look something up. We never have. No wonder we never made as much as we should."

"I am not a gambler," said Mr. Heed with dignity.

"I'll say you're not," said Mr. Freshman. "If you were you'd come in with me and keep your mouth shut. There's £15,000 in that safe. Fake a robbery and there's a nice little profit for both of us."

"You have my answer," said Mr. Heed. "I always knew you were a thief and a potential murderer."

"You did, eh?" asked Mr. Freshman. "But how?"

"Those women," said Mr. Heed. "They have been making you live beyond your income. I anticipated something like this happening."

"Go on," said Mr. Freshman. He had the safe open now and was putting the bundles of notes into his attache case.

"You have been drinking heavily for five years," said Mr. Heed.

"By jove," said Mr. Freshman. "That's an idea. This is hot work."

He put the last bundle into his case and stood up. He walk-

ed to the cupboard near the door and opened it. "Ah, whiskey!" exclaimed Mr. Freshman. "Scotch, too." He poured from a bottle into a tumbler.

"Undo my hands and I'll have one," said Mr. Heed.

Mr. Freshman considered for a moment.

"All right," he said. He undid the wire round Mr. Heed's wrists and stepped back. He pulled the automatic out of his pocket and put it on the top of the safe.

Mr. Heed rubbed his wrists. Mr. Freshman poured another whiskey, carried it over to the desk and set it before Heed.

"Cheers," said Mr. Freshman and drank. Mr. Heed raised his glass and very carefully let the whiskey slop on to the floor.

Mr. Freshman poured himself another glass, drank it, and then went to the window to the left of Mr. Heed. He edged the drawn blind out slowly so he could peer down into the street.

"Quite, quite clear," he pronounced and stepped back into the room. He clasped a hand to his head, swayed a little, clutched at a chair and sat down. He slid off the chair to the floor. He heard, from a long way off, Mr. Heed saying: "I took the precaution of guarding against this eventuality by doping the whiskey."

Helpless to do anything to stop him, Mr. Freshman saw Mr. Heed reach into the drawer beside him, pull out a pair of wire cutters, cut the wire, and then dial the police.

ANSWER TO SAINT-O-GRAM **. (See page 59)**

There was a little annex where reserves of eatables and drinks were being kept and when Helen happened to go there Tom and I managed to wriggle through the crowd.

Story—MURDER OF A MAHARAJAH

IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

THE MAN WHO SANG IN CHURCH . *by* EDGAR WALLACE
THE BUZZARD . . . . . *by* OCTAVUS ROY COHEN
STAINED GLASS WINDOWS . . . . . *by* LOUIS GOLDING
THE FIVE THOUSAND POUND KISS . *by* LESLIE CHARTERIS
STAIRWAY TO MURDER, *a new novel* . . . *by* RUFUS KING

—*of your* THE SAINT DETECTIVE MAGAZINE

open all night

by... Lawrence G. Blochman

There are no tears to be shed over a cop getting killed. A cop is like a soldier. It's part of their business.

A FEW hours before the murder, every stool was occupied in the Argonne Diner, Finicky Flynn's lunch wagon de-luxe, *open all night, ladies welcome.*

Flynn's tattooed arms, bare to the elbows, moved busily from counter to polished coffee machine to sizzling hot plate and back to counter—for at this time of night he was not only sole proprietor of the Argonne Diner, but chef, maitre d'hotel, and dish washer as well. He knew without asking what most of his customers wanted, for they were his regular midnight crowd, the majority of them. He deposited a Western sandwich in front of Clive, the sharp-nosed, sleepy-eyed newspaper reporter, and remarked with obvious displeasure that Bojek, a hairy-eared, bullet-headed longshoreman had been sitting over one cup of coffee for twenty minutes of mumbled conversation with another dark husky with hair in his eyes.

"You birds want some sinkers with that coffee?" Flynn asked pointedly.

Meet the most unusual detective in New York of the 30's! Lawrence G. Blochman, distinguished writer, past President of the Mystery Writers of America, introduces us to Finicky Flynn, once an army cook, who takes time off from running the Argonne Diner to hunt a murderer who has complicated his life.

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"No, tanks. Just coffee," said Bojek.

"Say, listen," said Flynn. "If you bozos want coffee, O.K., go ahead and drink it. But if you think you're doin' me a favor keepin' my stools warm, forget it. I can use them stools for payin' customers."

"Me and Mars was just talking," said Bojek. "We been waiting for somebody."

"Yeah, well, this ain't no waitin' room," said Flynn. "Drink your coffee and ease off them stools."

"Maybe you better give us some doughnuts, den," said Bojek. He tossed a two-dollar-bill across the counter.

Flynn served the doughnuts and made change for the bill. He filled a can with hot coffee for a telegraph messenger who had just come in. He watched the boy go out again into the night. It had started to rain—a cold rain, mixed with soft sleet that stuck to the windows. He couldn't see very well, because the windows were cloudy with condensed moisture from the warm interior, but he caught a glimpse of something that caused his eyes to narrow and his lips to harden a trifle. A second later two flashily dressed men came in. Flynn knew both of them—particularly the man with the yellow, square-toed shoes; the purple tie and the fawn-colored felt hat.

"Howdy, Cocky," Flynn addressed the purple tie, ignoring his companion.

"Howdy, Finicky."

The man in the purple tie was Jim DeWitt—called Cocky DeWitt when he had been regimental mess sergeant and Flynn the cook for E company. They were old soldiers, both Flynn and DeWitt, old soldiers with service at a score of posts, behind them when the regiment went to France. They were both cooks, but they had fought—fought between themselves—during four enlistments. They had started to fight when DeWitt was a company cook himself. They had continued on the slightest provocation—when Sergeant DeWitt had refused to increase the issue of garlic to Cook Flynn, claiming that garlic was not fit for white men's food; when Cook Flynn, in charge of a field kitchen in France, had sent Sergeant DeWitt's detail back three miles for onions. The onion incident was the culmination of a series of episodes which won for Richard Henry Flynn the name "Finicky."

Flynn's menu on that particular day had included beef stew. When there had been some question as to the wisdom of Flynn sending back the detail over ground open to occasional artillery fire, he explained: "Marshal Foch was in

the sector that day. Now all Frenchmen have a natural-born knowledge of cookin' just like all Irishmen have a natural-born knowledge of fightin'! What kind of a cook would the Marshal think I was, makin' beef stew without onions? I just had to have them onions."

There had been other fights, too—over blondes, over brandy, over brunettes—but none as violent and deep-seated as the antagonism arising out of DeWitt's scorn for Flynn's insistence on culinary exactitude, and out of Flynn's scorn for DeWitt's skill as a cook. "If he'd been any good, he wouldn't have had to get himself a mess sergeant's chevrons to high-hat the rest of us," Flynn had once said.

Flynn had left the army first and had bought his lunch wagon almost immediately. DeWitt got out six months later. He had hunted Flynn up almost immediately; he probably had missed the pleasure of the old feud as much as Flynn had. He came around to the Argonne Diner about once a week—alone at first, and very mysterious about what he was doing, and the vague "big deals" he was going to put over. Lately he had been coming around with Max Shavers, the pasty-faced gentleman with the pointed shoes, gray spats and pearl gray shoes, who now accompanied him.

Flynn knew Max Shavers and his gold-toothed grin. He knew him slightly by his unsavory reputation even before Cocky DeWitt had brought him around personally, and he had no desire to know him better. The last time Cocky had brought him around, Shavers had been pretty much coked up, and wanted to fight everybody. Flynn had thrown him out of the lunch wagon bodily. The Argonne Diner was a place to eat, not to start brawls. The street was plenty big enough for that.

"Cocky," said Flynn, giving Shavers a fishy stare, "I thought I told you to leave your friend home next time you come around here."

"Can that stuff, Finicky," said DeWitt. "What do you think you're running here, a country club or something? Sling us a couple mugs of java and two hot beef sandwiches. Make Max's on rye, and don't put no gravy on mine. I like it that way."

"I ain't got a thing in the place that your friend could eat," said Flynn to DeWitt. "Not a thing. Maybe he better try some other place. There's the Greasy Spoon right up the block a ways—"

Max Shavers slid off his stool and leaned his elbows on the counter as he pushed his head forward to glare at Flynn.

"Are you talking to me?" he demanded.

"I wasn't," said Flynn. "I was tryin' to save myself the trouble. But I'm talkin' to you now. I'm tellin' you that I threw you outa here once, and I still don't want you to come back. This ain't no Ex-Burglars' Club!"

Flynn tried to be nonchalant in his tirade. He casually picked up a bullet-proof coffee cup and polished it as he spoke, but the muscles standing out in his brick-colored neck betrayed his emotion.

In the tense second of silence that followed the end of Flynn's speech, Bojek, the bullet-headed longshoreman who had been watching Max Shavers with sidelong glances ever since his entrance, pulled his companion by the sleeve. The two left their coffee and doughnuts untouched, and made a hurried exit. A chill blast of air blew in through the crack they left in sliding the door open.

Shavers didn't move for several seconds. Suddenly he thrust his hands into his coat pockets, slowly withdrew one of them. His fingers grasped a stick of chewing gum. Watching Flynn the while, he peeled off the tin foil, folded the stick of gum in half, popped it into his mouth. Chewing audibly for an instant, he finally spoke.

"Listen," he said, "if you want to get hard—"

Flynn set his cup down on the counter with such force that the handle snapped off between his thumb and forefinger.

"Get outa here!" he ordered.

DeWitt nervously pulled Shavers away from the counter. He flung his arms about him and pushed him toward the door.

"Come on, Max, you ain't got time to fight tonight," he said.

Shavers suddenly seemed to grow reasonable. Making a contemptuous noise with his lips, he whirled and followed DeWitt into the night, leaving the door wide open.

Flynn started around the end of the counter to close the door when three new customers came in and saved him the trouble. One was a taxi-driver named Smith who came in nearly every night between twelve and one for a fried egg sandwich. The others were a man in dinner jacket and an ox-eyed blonde in evening clothes who had got out of a long low coupé at the curb.

Flynn didn't really cater to the Stiff Shirt trade, he reflected as he started Smith's egg sizzling, but he was resigned to getting a certain amount of it. Not that he was hypocritical about the gilt-lettered announcement on the door that ladies were welcome; they were. Flynn liked to gaze upon a nice-looking jane, even if she did exude

expensive perfumes that hardly blended with the aroma of frying onions, and her silken gown looked out of place among the corduroy and denims and leather jackets of the regular customers of the Argonne Diner. Flynn didn't even mind the twitterings and the self-conscious feeling of devilishness that always marked the advent of a woman in evening dress into an eating place of the lower strata. He did resent the inevitable condescension of their escorts, however.

Contemplation of the problem of the Stiff Shirts temporarily banished unpleasant thoughts of DeWitt and Max Shavers from Flynn's mind.

"What'll it be, folks?" he demanded, running his dish towel over the counter.

"I want a hamburger," piped the ox-eyed blonde, "without onions."

"There ain't no such thing," replied Flynn, looking at the wedding ring on the girl's finger.

"Why not?" protested the Stiff Shirt, pointing at the menu chalked on the blackboard above Flynn. "It says hamburger there."

"That's with onions," said Flynn, not turning around.

"Can't you leave the onions out?" piped the blonde.

"Sure he can," said her escort. He had a voice that somehow did not go with his evening clothes.

"Can't give you hamburger without onions," insisted Flynn. "Ground steak without onions is Salisbury. Either you want hamburger or you want Salisbury."

"I want Salisbury," said the girl.

"Make it two—and coffee," said her escort.

While the meat cakes were frying on the hot grid, Flynn watched the newcomers curiously. The man's mind was obviously elsewhere. He was using his eyes and ears alertly, seemingly expecting someone or something . . . He swallowed half his coffee but did not touch his sandwich.

"Give us the check," said the Stiff Shirt at last.

"That'll be a dollar," said Flynn, leaning forward to display his arms on the counter so that the perfumed lady could admire the nude beauty with her red hair coiled about her blue nakedness tattooed on his left forearm. "Thirty for the sandwiches, ten for the java—"

"And thirty each cover charge," broke in the man in evening clothes. "I know the spiel! We came down here to gawk and there's no reason why we should get a floor show free —particularly as the cover goes to the unemployed. Here . . ." He tossed forty cents in change

to the counter and ostentatiously pushed a five-dollar-bill through the slot in Finicky Flynn's Unemployed Fund box at the end of the counter.

"Thanks," said Flynn, "and excuse me for not recognizin' an old customer. It was your dame that threw me off. Last time you come down here it was with a dark lookin' gal."

The Stiff Shirt was about to say something in reply when a series of six sharp explosions sounded somewhere outside. His entire facial expression changed for the brief fraction of a second as he jerked his head around.

"Don't be alarmed," said Flynn. "That's just some truck backfirin'."

But the Stiff Shirt, his face again expressionless, was making a hurried exit, pushing the ox-eyed blonde before him. A few seconds later his car was roaring away from the curb.

"I should of remembered that bird," said Flynn to Smith, the chauffeur with a crooked nose who was reaching in his pocket for change. "He came around last week in that same car—it's some Eyetalian car—what do they call 'em—Rizotto Marasachino?"

But Chauffeur Smith was no longer listening. With his sleeve he had wiped away some of the steam from the window pane and was peering into the night. The series of sharp sounds like trucks backfiring had resumed with greater frequency and staccato.

"That ain't no truck!" exclaimed Smith. "That's a gun-fight!"

He tossed some money to the counter and rushed out. His curiosity spread to Flynn's other customers, and in less than a minute the diner was empty. Flynn himself would have loved to follow the excitement but he could not leave his lunch wagon. For a moment he watched through the space in the window that Smith had cleared. He saw people running in the dark street, heard police whistles. Two motorcycles flashed by, sirens screaming. Then he decided to brave pneumonia, flung the door open, and went out into the cold rain in his shirt sleeves in order to see better.

There was a crowd gathering some two hundred yards down the street, in front of one of the peaked pier entrances that loomed in line in the darkness like the teeth of a giant saw. He craned his neck and shaded his eyes for several minutes, but could make nothing of the confusion. Then he saw a man running toward him out of the night—running, but with a decided limp. When the man saw Flynn, he dropped suddenly into a walk, hesitated,

stopped, and was about to move on again when Flynn accosted him.

"What's all the shootin' about?" asked Flynn.

"I don't know," said the man.

"What'd you stop for just now?" Flynn demanded gruffly.

"Nothing," said the man.

"Nothing my eye," said Flynn. "You was just gettin' ready to touch me for a handout."

He quickly sized up the man who stood shivering in the rain. He could not be more than twenty. His pale face was pinched and thin. He had large intelligent eyes and bright red hair that showed beneath a gray cap. He wore no overcoat. He was shivering violently.

"As a matter of fact," said the youth, "I was thinking of coming in to ask you if you wouldn't let me wash dishes or something in return for a bite to eat."

"I suppose you been out of a job for six months and ain't had anything to eat for three days," Flynn suggested.

"No," said the youth, "I lost my job just ten weeks ago, and I had a little something to eat this morning."

"Where'd you work?"

"I used to wrestle crates at Washington Market."

"Let's see your hands."

The youth withdrew his hands from his pockets and turned his palms up. His hands were blue with cold but there were signs of callouses on them. A man doesn't get callouses hanging around pool halls, Flynn reflected.

"I'll give you some chow," said Flynn, "but you got to work for it. I don't put much stock in the yarn you birds hand out."

He led the red-headed youth into the little room shut off at one end of the car, which was the potato-peeling and dish-washing department of the Argonne Diner.

"My name's Johnson," said the youth, "and I'm—"

"I don't care what your name is," interrupted Flynn. "All I want is for you to manicure them spuds there. I'll pass you some chow in here. You ain't very ornamental to have sittin' out front."

For the moment Flynn forgot the commotion at the pier. The redhead's forlorn appearance had touched him. The kid might be a professional panhandler and all that, but he sure was cold and he looked thin enough to bear out any story of starvation. He was sitting on a box, his eyes closed, both arms hugging his left knee when Flynn brought in a heaping plate of steaming corned beef and cabbage.

"Eat this," he ordered, "and then get to work on them spuds."

Flynn returned to the counter. The diner was still empty, so he cut a thick roast beef sandwich, and put it into a bag. He struck the No Sale key of his register, reached for a dollar bill, changed his mind and instead fished out the two-dollar-bill Bojek had given him. A two-dollar-bill was bad luck anyhow, Flynn explained to himself in justification for his generosity; he'd probably be giving it out in change as a one. He put the money in the sack with the sandwich and went into the pantry.

"Hey, you!" he said, throwing the paper bag to the redhead. "Stick this in your pocket. Not that you're earnin' it. But it's just in case you don't find any suckers around breakfast time tomorrow."

He slammed the door closed before the redhead could thank him, in case the kid had any gratitude in his make-up. Customers had started to come in and as he prepared their orders, Flynn got from them confused and conflicting stories of the shooting. It was not long, however, before he got the official version from Officer Hall—the pink-faced, stub-nosed cop on the beat.

Hall was a pretty good cop, in Flynn's eyes, because he always insisted on paying for what he ate. Flynn didn't always take his money—a restaurateur had to be polite to the cop on his beat—but the gesture of not expecting to eat free endeared him to Flynn.

"A lot of ammunition wasted," was Hall's explanation. "We had the tip, and still they got away—clean, it looks like."

"Who got away?" Flynn wanted to know.

"The yeggs that've been pulling these dock robberies for the last three months," said Hall. "They been cracking open shipments from abroad before they got to the appraisers' stores. Only taking half of 'em, so the job wouldn't be noticed right off. Furs, mostly. Chinchillas from South America, and the like. We had a tip they were going to work on Pier G tonight. But it turned out to be Pier H, so our boys muffed it. They got a truck with a fake customs house license or something."

"Tough luck," said Flynn. "What'll you eat tonight, Officer? I got some damned fine corned beef I corned myself—"

"I won't have time," said Officer Hall. "I just come in to ask if you seen that man DeWitt that's in here sometimes."

"He was in about an hour or so ago," said Flynn.

"Alone?"

"No, he was with a guy."

"Who? That hophead Shavers?"

"I think that's his name. Why?"

"DeWitt lives around here, don't he?"

"Not that I know of. He used to live in Brooklyn. What happened to Cocky DeWitt?"

"Nothing," said Officer Hall, nodding to himself. "Only these detectives think they're the only policemen that ever wore a shield. I got a theory that the brains of the force wears uniforms, and I'm going to prove it tonight. So long, Flynn."

Within half an hour the lunch wagon was empty again. Flynn looked at the clock above the regimented rows of breakfast food in one-portion packages. It was twenty of three. Edwards, the night man, would be along pretty soon. Edwards handled the diner from three to ten in the morning, while Flynn slept. Flynn didn't think much of Edwards' ability, but he was good enough to fry bacon and eggs and cook oatmeal. Flynn himself always got up and came down to see that the lunch was cooked in a manner befitting the reputation of an old E Company cook and the Argonne Diner.

Edwards came in just as Flynn had finished drafting his menu for the day. He was a pock-marked, taciturn fellow whose mouth bore the constant expression of a man who had just eaten something bitter. Flynn made a note of the cash, put on his overcoat, turned up the collar, then suddenly remembered about the red-headed Johnson he had left peeling potatoes in the pantry.

"Good God," he said to himself, "I hope he ain't been peelin' spuds all this time."

He threw open the door. The pantry was empty. Only two or three potatoes had been peeled. The red-headed youth was gone. He must have left by the back way. On the floor, by the box he had been sitting on, was a large pool of blood, just beginning to coagulate.

"I might of known it," said Flynn, cursing himself for being too gullible. Still, that pool of blood bothered him. He told Edwards to wipe it up, offered no explanation, and went out. He hurried through the cold rain to his furnished room a few blocks around the corner, two stories above the roar of the Ninth Avenue L.

He had been in bed and asleep scarcely an hour when he was awakened by an authoritative pounding.

"Open that door!" demanded a bass voice.

"Open it yourself," he replied sleepily. "I never lock it. There ain't nothin' to steal—"

Flynn blinked into the glare of two flashlights. He reached

out of bed and switched on the electricity. He saw two burly men bending over him. One had a square-cut gray mustache. The other had a bulldog jaw.

"You've got a friend named James DeWitt?" barked the bulldog.

"I wouldn't call Cocky DeWitt a friend, exactly—"

"You know him, don't you?"

"Hell, yes. Too damned well, in fact."

"Where is he?" growled the man with the mustache.

"Listen, gents, don't wake up a guy in the middle of the night to ask him silly riddles—"

"Can the patter!" snapped the man with the mustache. "I'm Gloster of the detective bureau. Your friend DeWitt is wanted for murder."

"Murder?"

"That's it. Policeman Hall was shot dead in DeWitt's room fifteen minutes ago."

The word murder was sufficient to awaken Flynn fully. He swung his feet out of bed and stood up.

"You say Hall was killed in Cocky DeWitt's room?" he repeated incredulously.

"That's it," said Gloster, while his companion was roving about Flynn's room, opening closet doors and looking behind chairs. "In DeWitt's place around the corner on Jay Street."

"But DeWitt don't live on Jay Street," said Flynn.

"Oh, he don't? Where does he live then?" demanded Gloster.

Flynn hesitated. So far as he knew DeWitt lived in Brooklyn, but there was no use in divulging this information gratuitously to these dicks. Not that he had any intention of shielding DeWitt if he plugged Hall, because DeWitt was a louse and Hall was a good cop. Still—

"I don't know where he lives," said Flynn, "but I didn't think he lived anywhere near here."

"Well, he does," said Gloster. "He's had this place in Jay Street in his own name for the past six weeks, according to the landlady. And the plainclothesman who went there with Hall was waiting down at the street door when Hall went up. He says that DeWitt came along and went upstairs a little after Hall did, and that a minute later there were three shots. He rushed upstairs and found Hall dead, and the room empty. DeWitt hadn't come down. They're searching the house and the houses next door right now."

Flynn started to pull on a pair of trousers.

"Take me over to this place," he said, "and I'll probably be able to help you."

It was not yet daylight. The rain had subsided to a penetrating drizzle when Flynn and the two detectives walked out into Greenwich Street. On the way over to the Jay Street address, Flynn learned that Gloster had immediately come to see him because Hall, shortly before he had been killed, had phoned in to Headquarters to say that DeWitt and Max Shavers had been seen in the Argonne Diner, and he intended calling on them at home.

"Did all this have anything to do with the dock robberies?" asked Flynn.

Gloster looked at him sharply as they passed a street lamp.

"What do you know about the dock robberies?" he demanded.

Flynn spat confidently six feet ahead of him.

"I know that the detective bureau's been workin' on the job for three months, durin' which time there's been God knows how many dollars worth of furs swiped, and that tonight, when they had the tip on a new job at Pier G, they muffed it because it happened to be Pier H—"

Gloster halted, pinioned Flynn's arms, and nodded to his companion, who immediately flashed a pair of handcuffs.

"Wait a minute," protested Flynn. "I'm just repeatin' what Officer Hall told me himself when he came into my joint askin' for DeWitt and Shavers."

Gloster fingered the handcuffs a moment, glared at Flynn, then passed the bracelets back to his companion. He started walking again.

A moment later they came to a dingy rooming house. A crowd of night hawks and early birds had gathered on the sidewalk, craning their necks and trying to push past the police lines that had been formed. An ambulance stood at the curb. Neighbors in various stages of undress leaned out of windows in the hope of seeing at least the corpse. Flynn and the two detectives pushed through the crowd and climbed three flights of musty-smelling stairs.

They entered the room which Gloster said was DeWitt's. It seemed crowded with policemen and reporters. Two ambulance surgeons were just lifting the body of Police Officer Pat Hall from a cot to a stretcher. He had been shot once in the back, they said, and once through the temple. A mirror had been broken by a shot from Hall's own gun, discharged instinctively as he fell. Besides the blood-soaked cot, there was little furniture in the room—two rickety chairs, a table on which stood a pack of greasy cards, a half-empty gin bottle and two glasses, a towel rack by a washstand, a gas

plate in a corner, and a small cupboard. There were no clothes in the closet to indicate that the room had been anyone's permanent residence.

Finicky Flynn was looking into the closet when he suddenly began to sniff. "Something's burning," he said.

"Turn off that damned stove," Gloster ordered a uniformed officer. "There was something cooking on that gas plate when we first busted in," he explained to Flynn, "and in the excitement nobody thought of turning it off."

"Let's see it," said Flynn, walking over to the shelf that served as kitchen and justified the sign over the door of the house — "Housekeeping Rooms." He lifted the lid of a ten-cent-store saucepan and sniffed at the contents, which had merely begun to scorch on the bottom. He put back the lid and looked into the cupboard. Besides a meagre assortment of cheap crockery and cutlery, there was a loaf of French bread and a half-moon of odorous cheese.

"If I was you," said Flynn to Gloster, "I'd take this pot down to the station house and stick it in the ice chest. It'll come in handy when you start buildin' up evidence against the guy that plugged poor old Hall."

"We got all the evidence we need against DeWitt," growled Gloster. "And anyhow, Police Headquarters ain't no cold storage plant. What's the idea, anyhow?"

"It might not be nothing at all," said Flynn. "I'll let you know later in the day. But in the meantime, if you can put some seals or somethin' on this pot so as to make the contents legal evidence, I'd be glad to keep it in my own ice box down to the Argonne Diner."

"No, you don't," said Gloster, suddenly suspicious that the evil-looking mess in the bottom of the pot might actually contain some miraculous clue that he did not care to admit was invisible to his own eyes. "I'll take it myself."

"That's O.K. with me," said Flynn. "And if I was you, I'd take that bread and cheese too."

"Is that all you got to tell us?" snorted Gloster. "I thought you were going to spill us some lowdown on this killing, and all you do is load us up with groceries."

"Suit yourself," said Flynn. "But I got to be going. I got work to do."

"Hold on," said the detective with the bulldog jaw. "You letting him go, Gloster?"

"He don't seem to be much help," said Gloster. "We'll talk to him again later. Beat it, chef, but don't try to give us the runaround."

"No chance," said Flynn. He

knew, as he left, that he would be shadowed until Cocky DeWitt had been arrested. He walked home, pondering the events of the past half hour, thinking of DeWitt and Shavers, catching himself on the point of getting sentimental over the dead Hall. There are no tears to be shed over a cop getting killed. A cop is like a soldier. It's part of their business . . . He quickened his step. The streets were gray with the shadowless half-light that preceded dawn. The city was awakening. Trucks rumbled down West Street. Tug boats were hooting at each other in North River. He turned into his stairway and climbed to his room.

A strange impression came over him as he opened the door. The room was dark, although he could distinguish objects by the gray half-light from the single window. He had an instinctive feeling that someone was in his room, that he had heard movement there before opening the door. He paused, with one foot still on the threshold, looking about. There was no one in sight, of course. Then his eyes fell on the door to the closet. He remembered that one of the detectives had left the closet open. It was closed now.

With three swift strides Flynn was beside his bed. He plunged his hand under his pillow for the Army .45 he always kept there, more by force of habit than because he feared aggression. The .45 was gone. He picked up the pillow, turned up the mattress. There was no doubt about it. There was no gun.

He took a step toward the closet, paused. Whoever was in the closet probably had his gun. He would have to bluff—if there was anyone in there. "Come outa there," he ordered, "before I blow you out."

There was a moment of silence. Flynn took another step toward the closet. Then a small, muffled voice, almost a whisper, said:

"Don't shoot, Finicky. It's me."

Flynn walked quickly to the closet, pulled the door open. Cocky DeWitt emerged, Flynn's .45 grasped in his trembling hand. There was nothing cocky about him now. His flashy clothes were bedraggled by rain and mud. His face was smeared with dirt. He was obviously badly frightened.

"What the hell are you doin' here?" demanded Flynn.

DeWitt made a frantic gesture for silence. "Not so loud, Finicky, for God's sake!" he pleaded in a stage whisper.

Flynn snatched his gun back from DeWitt's unresisting clutch.

"I don't want no murderers in my room," he said, indicating the door.

"I didn't do it, Finicky! Honest to God, I didn't kill the cop."

"Who did, then?"

"I don't know."

With the open palm of his hand Flynn smacked DeWitt across the face. DeWitt staggered back and sat down on the bed.

"You come here askin' favors," said Flynn, "and then you lie to me."

"Honest, Finicky, I don't know who did it," said DeWitt. "Honest."

There was no fight in him. The old Cocky DeWitt would have struck back. The figure before Flynn now was terrified, abject, pitiful.

"Then what you doin' sniveling around here?" Flynn asked.

"Lock the door!" pleaded DeWitt. Then he began his story.

"After I left your feed cart with Max Shavers," he said, "we went over to Jake's for a couple of beers. Then Max sent me on an errand and told me to meet him in Jay Street—"

"What kind of an errand?" interrupted Flynn.

"He sent me after some stuff."

"What kind of stuff?"

"Some—well, some snow."

"Go on."

"Well, it must have been pretty near an hour before I got back to Jay Street—"

"Say, what's the idea of that Jay Street place, anyhow?" Flynn broke in again. "Is it yours?"

"Well, in a way it is. I rented it for Max—"

"Did you ever live in it?"

"We both stayed in it sometimes—"

"When you were too coked up to go home?"

"Well, Max used it more than me. He seemed to want it . . . Anyhow, I got back there and started to climb the stairs. I was on the second landing when I heard three shots. I guess I was scared. I stopped. I heard feet and a door opening and being shut. Then I ran up the stairs to the room. I saw the cop laying on the floor, all bloody. There was nobody there. Max or whoever was there must have got out the fire escape. The window at the end of the hall was open. So I kept on running up the stairs to the roof. I didn't want to be caught with a dead cop in my room and a pack of nose candy in my pocket . . ."

"What did you do with the coke?"

"I dropped it down the first chimney I came to. I crawled around over the roofs in the rain. I damn near broke my neck once or twice in the dark, so I lay behind a water tank for a

little while. I thought the cops would be right after me, but nobody came. Then I remembered that you lived over here by the 'L,' so I thought I'd crawl over and see if I could find your roof. Lucky I did."

"I ain't sure it was so lucky," commented Flynn.

DeWitt's tortured eyes grew larger.

"You can't turn me out, Finicky," he pleaded.

Flynn's thumb kept pushing the safety of his .45 on and off, but he did not take his eyes from DeWitt.

"Why can't I?" he asked.

"Because the breaks are against me," said DeWitt, "and I can't clear myself without ringing in Max, and if I ring in Max—" He stopped and swallowed.

"You're scared to death of that Shavers bird, ain't you?"

DeWitt did not reply.

"And he's sure as hell made a spineless, whimperin', lily-livered sap out of you in no time," Flynn continued. "You always was a cantankerous cuss, Cocky, but at least you had guts. Now, though—now you come crawlin' to the lousiest company cook in the division."

"I always said that, Finicky, but I never meant it. You know I never meant it. We got different tastes, that's all. You ain't going to let me down now, are you, Finicky?"

Flynn got up and paced the floor.

"I suppose you know, Cocky, that the cops are watchin' me," he said at last. "They come after me first crack, as soon as they decided they was lookin' for you. I was over in Jay Street and saw the mess. Poor old Hall . . . And you can bet your pants they ain't goin' to let me outa their sight. It would be a swell thing if they found you in here. They'd sure as hell have me up for defeatin' the ends of justice by harborin' a murderer . . ."

"But I didn't do it, Finicky. I've got myself in a mess, all right, but I didn't kill the cop. You believe me, don't you?"

"Cocky," said Flynn, "you're a natural-born liar. Even if I'd of liked you, I couldn't of been blind to your tossin' off a lie just as easy as the truth. I always thought you was a son-of-a-shemule and I still think so. But for once I'm goin' to believe you. I'll probably be sorry for it, but I can't see an old soldier go downhill like you. I'm going to help you—"

"Thanks, Finicky—"

"But there's a string to it. I ain't a reformer or anything. If you want to be a crook, it's none of my business. Say so, and it's O.K. with me. But, my God, be a man at the same time—stand up and take it, if it's handed to you. If you shoot anybody, shoot

it out to his face, not in the back. If that's what you want, I'll say good-bye and bad luck to you. But if you want to try to be decent, give me your word, whatever it's worth, that you're through with Max Shavers."

"I give you my word, Finicky."

"O.K., then. Now tell me where Shavers lives."

DeWitt hesitated.

"Where does Shavers live?"

DeWitt gave an address. Flynn put his pistol in his pocket.

"All right, sit tight," he said. "I'll see you later. I'm going to lock you in, so they won't be any question about my bein' away. I'll see that you get some breakfast later."

Flynn walked down the street to the West Side subway station at Chambers Street and took the Bronx Express. It took him forty minutes to get to the address DeWitt had given him. He found no one there.

His first impulse was to return home and throw out DeWitt for shielding Shavers. Then he reflected that perhaps the address was correct, after all. Shavers was not likely to put in an appearance there if he thought the police were after him. He would have to take another tack, that's all. He took the subway back downtown. On the way he read the papers anxiously, but the murder had been too late for the morning editions.

He surprised Edwards by showing up at the Argonne Diner two hours before his accustomed time, but Edwards made no comment. He casually mentioned that two detectives had come in, looking for the boss, but did not seem curious as to their mission.

Flynn bought the early morning editions of the first evening newspaper to reach the street, and read what he sought:

COP KILLED IN DUEL WITH EX-ARMY COOK

screamed the headlines. Then followed the story:

Police today were seeking James DeWitt, discharged from the U. S. Army six months ago, as a suspect in the killing of Policeman Patrick Hall, in a Jay Street rooming house early this morning.

Hall, who succeeded in firing one shot at his murderer, was shot in the back and through the head. He had gone to DeWitt's room as a result of developments in trailing a gang of dock thieves who were active at Pier H last night.

According to Detective E. H. Gloster, DeWitt, an ex-mess sergeant and army cook, was engaged in cooking in his room just before the murder. He had gone out for something and

finding Hall in his rooms on his return, shot him down without warning. He eluded police by going down the fire escape. Detective Gloster seized a number of objects, among them a saucepan in which DeWitt was cooking, and declares they represent conclusive evidence.

Max Shavers, alleged associate of DeWitt in the dock robberies, is thought to have been with him this morning and is being sought as an accomplice. R. H. Flynn, also an ex-army cook and now proprietor of a lunch wagon, has been questioned by detectives but as yet has not been held.

Hall, who was 39, leaves a wife and three children. He had been on the police force eleven years and had an excellent record.

Finicky Flynn crumpled the newspaper with a brusque movement that upset the cup of coffee he had been drinking. He swore oaths a foot long. The idea of linking his name with Max Shavers!

He was still swearing when Smith, the taxi-driver, came into the diner and sat down. He seemed ill at ease.

"Hello, Smitty," said Flynn. "You hackin' in the daytime now?"

"Not exactly," said Smith, rubbing his crooked nose as he looked at Edwards.

"What'll it be? Ham an'?" asked Flynn.

"Naw," said Smith, still looking at Edwards. "Just—just coffee."

"Say, Edwards," said Flynn, "will you go out in back and see how much is left in that last sack of coffee?"

"Listen," said Smith in a stage whisper when Edwards had disappeared. "Max Shavers wants to see you."

"Yeah?" Flynn's heavy eyebrows raised a trifle. "Well, I don't want to see him."

"You better come along with me," said Smith nervously.

"What's the idea?" demanded Flynn. "You hooked up with Shavers?"

Smith shook his head in violent denial.

"God, no!" he said. "I'm cruising uptown last night, about an hour or so after I left here, when a guy comes running out in the rain and hails me. When he comes up I see it's Shavers. He gets in and gives me an address without recognizing me. When he finally sees my picture on the police card, he pokes a gun in my back. 'No monkey business,' he says, 'or I'll plug you and I ain't playing, either.' I takes him to a loft building in 18th Street. Still holding the gun on me, he grabs my hack badge. 'You don't know me,' he says. 'You didn't see me tonight and you

can't remember this address. If you play ball, you get your badge back. If you don't, you'll be mixed up in a hell of a racket, and I got your badge to prove it.' Twenty minutes ago he phones me to come and get you and bring you to see him right away. I think it's about DeWitt—"

"Probably," said Flynn.

"You're coming, ain't you?" asked Smith.

"So you're scared of him too?"

"I was in a jam over my license a couple months back, and this guy Shavers could make a pack of trouble for me. . . ."

Flynn was drumming with his fingers on the counter. Edwards came in to announce that there was plenty of coffee left. Flynn got up.

"Edwards," he said, "I'm goin' out. I'll be back in an hour."

Fifteen minutes later Flynn got out of an elevator and walked up two flights of dusty stairs to the loft floor of an old building. At the head of the stairs a sign on a door announced the Pictinson Import and Export Company. The door was locked. Flynn pounded with his fists. The door was opened a crack and immediately shut again. Flynn resumed pounding. A few seconds later he was admitted by a weasel-eyed, shaven-headed individual who conducted him across a dismal vacant floor to another door. The second door led to an ill-lighted room in which were a few pieces of dilapidated office furniture and a dozen packing boxes. Flynn was left alone here while the weasel-eyed individual disappeared through a third door.

Flynn sat down for a moment on a dusty chair. He was distinctly uncomfortable, despite the fact that he had his .45 in his pocket. After a moment's uneasy wait, he got up and started to pace the floor. Two minutes of this, and Max Shavers appeared.

"Flynn," said Shavers, "I hate your guts."

"Same to you," said Flynn. "Is that all you wanted?"

"Sit down."

"After you," said Flynn with mock politeness.

The two men sat down facing each other across a rickety table.

"Flynn," said Shavers, "don't think I couldn't have stayed in your lousy joint last night if I'd wanted to. Don't think I don't remember that sock in the eye—"

"Listen," broke in Flynn. "You didn't send Smith around to me because you wanted to swap memories. Let's get down to business. What do you want?"

Shavers' gold teeth gleamed as he grinned. "Where's DeWitt?" he asked.

"How should I know?"

"You oughta know. He's in your room."

"Where'd you get that idea?"

Shavers continued to grin. "That's the only place left for him to go. We checked all the others. And one of the boys called at your room. He said the door was locked but he heard someone moving around inside —someone didn't answer his knock.

"Well?"

"I'm taking DeWitt out of town," said Shavers, leaning back in his chair. "See that he's at the 125th Street Station of the Lenox Avenue Subway at nine tonight. I'll pick him up in my car."

"He won't be there," said Flynn.

"He better be."

"He won't," repeated Flynn.

"In that case," said Shavers, suddenly hard, "both you and Cocky'll be in the jug by midnight—on a charge of murder."

Flynn crossed his legs, lit a cigarette and blew a gust of smoke in Shavers' face.

"Cocky didn't kill Hall," he said.

"He can't prove he didn't," said Shavers. "Nobody can prove he didn't. He won't have the ghost of an alibi, because all the places he was just before the murder have got instructions, and none of the people in 'em saw Cocky that night. There's an air-tight case of circumstantial evidence against him, and what's against him is against you, too. You're hiding a murderer in your room."

Flynn was apparently calm, except for the fact that he was smoking furiously. "By the way," he asked, with a tremendouc effort to be casual, "who the hell did kill the cop, anyway?"

Shavers' gold tooth flashed again. "Wouldn't you like to know?" he sneered.

"I got my own idears," said Flynn. "Also I notice in the mornin' papers that the cops are lookin' for Max Shavers."

"Ain't you observing," commented Shavers, "for a pot wolloper."

"I was just wonderin'," Flynn came back, "if it wouldn't be a pretty good idear if instead of sendin' Cocky out to the 125th Street subway station, I called up my friend Gloster at the Detective Bureau and told him where he could find Max Shavers."

"Not very good," Shavers replied, "because before you could get out of the elevator, I'd be on the phone myself, telling where Cocky DeWitt, the murderer, was hiding, and who was hiding him."

Flynn lighted a fresh cigarette from the stub of his old one and looked about the room significantly as he again began

puffing out smoke like an overworked donkey engine.

"Suppose," he said, "I decided that Cocky DeWitt is a louse, which he is—and that personally I got all the alibis I need, and that it's worth a little trouble to me, and riskin' the seat of Cocky's pants to him to see that you get what's comin' to you? Of course, if you lay off Cocky, I'd lay off you. Otherwise, my pal Gloster'll be right up to look over your collection of Roosian sables, or whatever you got in them boxes. There's nothin' to prevent him."

"Ain't there?" Shavers pushed back his chair with a rasping sound. He stood up. "There's plenty. There's me!"

Flynn did not move, but his lower jaw advanced half an inch. The muscles of his neck became suddenly visible.

"That's not enough," he said.

"It's plenty!" repeated Shavers. "The two floors below this are vacant. The walls are sound-proof. You won't get out of here—"

Flynn sprang to his feet. His right arm went back. His right hand dove swiftly for his pocket. But he did not draw his gun. Something clamped on his arm from behind, tugged, dragged it down.

Shavers leered.

Flynn spun around. He found himself staring into the weasel eyes of the shaven-headed individual who had admitted him. In the Weasel's left hand a knife gleamed. His right clung tenaciously to Flynn's gun.

Flynn executed a quick body movement that resembled somewhat a cross between a football player making a quick onside kick and a fencer doing a lunge and sidestep simultaneously. The knife clattered to the floor on the impact of Flynn's booted toe against the Weasel's knuckles. But the Weasel clung to his gun hand.

Flynn swung a left to the Weasel's head. The Weasel ducked. Flynn jerked the gun. The Weasel snapped toward him. The crotch of Flynn's elbow caught his shaven skull in a head chancery. Then Max Shavers intervened. Kicking aside the table, he swung his chair above his head, brought it down across Flynn's shoulders.

Flynn staggered forward under the blow. One of the rungs of the chair had caught him at the base of the skull, stunning him. His brain cleared almost instantly. He struggled to his feet, yanking again at his gun.

The Weasel hung on. He was smaller than Flynn, but he had a grip like a bulldog's jaw.

Then Flynn caught a glimpse of Shavers over his shoulder. Shaver was just swinging the

sights of a .32 automatic into line.

"Drop that, Flynn," Shavers ordered.

For an answer, Flynn pulled the Weasel off his feet, whirled, held the struggling man between himself and Shavers.

"Go on, shoot!" said Flynn.

"I'd just as soon shoot the two of you," replied Shavers without moving. "But I'll give you a chance to change your mind. I'll count three. One—"

The prospect of being sacrificed did not appeal to the Weasel.

"Fer Gawd's sake, Max!" he panted.

"Two—"

"Max!"

Flynn felt the Weasel's grasp relax a trifle. At the same instant he picked up the Weasel, flung him bodily at Shavers, snatched back his .45. The Weasel and Shavers collapsed together against the wall.

Flynn saw Shavers' automatic merge from the tangle of arms and legs. He thrust forward the muzzle of his .45, pulled the trigger.

There was a harmless click, then another click.

Flynn swore. Damn Cocky DeWitt! This was his doing. Why the hell had Cocky unloaded Flynn's .45? Was it deliberate? Anyhow, why had he, Flynn, been damned fool enough to come on a mission like this without making sure his gun was loaded?

Shavers' gun spat flame and noise. Flynn dropped to his hands and knees. Broken plaster rained on his back. Shavers' shot had gone high, thank heavens, but the game was up. Flynn's escape was cut off. Unless—there was that third floor door just behind him! It was worth a trial.

Another report thundered in his ears and a bullet splintered into wood at his side as he crashed through the floor. Immediately afterward he realized he had made a mistake. He had run into a blind alley. The door led him into a room, piled with packing cases, from which there was no other exit. He was trapped. He hurdled a pile of boxes, prepared to barricade himself.

"You may as well come out," said the voice of Max Shavers, "and listen to reason. Otherwise I'll just lock you in and tell the cops where to find you."

Flynn said nothing.

"Come out!" chimed the shrill voice of the Weasel. Through a crack between two cases Flynn saw the Weasel advancing boldly into the room. Shavers appeared in the doorway. Flynn braced himself as the Weasel came closer. With a sudden lunge, Flynn toppled a box from the pile in front of him. The Weasel started back, too late. The heavy case fell on

him, pinning his legs to the floor. He screamed. Flynn ducked as Shavers fired again. Then, peering between two boxes, he chuckled to himself. The color had gone out of Shavers' face. He was making jerky movements with his right hand. His automatic had jammed.

Flynn then straightened up, stretched himself, and in a leisurely manner clambered over the barricade of boxes. As he advanced on Shavers, he stripped off his coat and started rolling up his sleeves above the tattooed Statue of Liberty and the blue-and-red nude beauty.

"Shavers," he said, "I'm goin' to reason with you in the only way you understand. I'm goin' to argue with you till you tell me who killed Hall. And if you're too pig-headed, I'll argue you to a pulp so you'll be easier for the dicks to work on."

Shavers flung his disabled gun into Flynn's face. It struck Flynn's cheek bone, cutting a gash under his eye. Flynn continued to advance. Shavers turned to run. Flynn made a dive for him, caught the back of his coat collar with his left hand, yanked him back to smash his right to the mouth. He released his hold, squared off to repeat the dose when Shavers, spitting blood, frantic, came at him with eyes closed, swinging his fists blindly, desperately. One of the wild blows caught Flynn on the point of the chin. He stopped, surprised, badly jolted. He shook his head fiercely. Shavers had again turned to run.

Again Flynn started after him, but this time Shavers had a good start. He fled down the vacant loft, his foot-steps echoing hollowly. He reached the outside door five paces in the lead, slammed the door in Flynn's face, locked it.

Flynn swore eloquently as he applied his shoulder. Between the whacking sounds of his shoulder against the door paneling, he heard Shavers' steps on the staircase, then the whine of the ascending elevator.

By the time Flynn had smashed and splintered his way out, Shavers had reached the street. Flynn renewed his profanity, but with a sinking feeling now. Shavers, at liberty, was certain to claim vengeance. In five minutes the police would take DeWitt in Flynn's room.

Max Shavers got out of the elevator, holding his handkerchief to his mouth to hide the trickle of blood. He could feel his cut lips puffing as he walked rapidly down the street and around the corner. He entered a cigar store, stepped into a phone booth, dropped in a dime and called a number.

"This is Max," he said, holding his mouth close to the transmitter. "Listen. Get this.

We got to get rid of DeWitt . . . Yeah, but he's in bad hands, and we can't be bothered . . . Who? Why, you are, of course . . . I know, but you'll get your jack tonight . . . You'll get it, I tell you. You already got some, didn't you? . . . All right . . . He's in Flynn's room . . . Use the same gun . . . and leave it around . . . Yeah, I want Flynn to get hooked on this . . . Listen, get over there right away. No, sooner than that . . . Because in five minutes I'm calling the cops to tell 'em that DeWitt is at Flynn's . . . They'll find the corpse, but be sure they don't find you . . . That's your problem. We skip tonight . . . I'll call you at Jake's in an hour. . . ."

Shavers hung up. He stood a moment staring at the telephone instrument, seemed on the point of dropping in another dime, then hurried out. He wasn't taking a chance of the call being traced. He walked a block to a drug store, entered another booth. He took a little book from his pocket and consulted a list of names. He needed money before he left town, since he might be a long time away from the source of supply. The names in the book were the names of customers of the Pectinson Export and Import Co. Most of them were fences, who, though by tacit understanding the matter was never mentioned, knew they were buying stolen furs. A few of them were legitimate buyers; in dealing with these, neither Shavers nor the mythical Pectinson concern ever entered into the dealings.

Cocky DeWitt had been the go-between with these accounts —which was one of the reasons that Shavers had just decided against allowing DeWitt to fall into the hands of the police. The professional fences would all be wary, if not absolutely out of sight, after the publicity given last night's affair at the pier. No chance of getting any money out of them. The legitimates always paid by check; that was no good either. The only possibility was a sort of dabbler named Letterman. Letterman was not a professional yet he certainly knew the sort of goods he was buying. Shavers called up Letterman.

"Hello, Mr. Letterman, this is James Witt," said Shavers. "I've got a bargain in a small lot of sables this morning. You can have them cheap—for cash . . . No, Mr. Letterman, that business at the pier didn't have anything to do with us . . . Yes, I know, but not actually . . . No, there's not the least bit of danger. I can send them over right now . . . Well, all right . . . Yes, I can meet you there if you want. At what time? . . . Not before? . . . All right, then . . . Don't forget the cash."

Well, that settled that. It was a damned nuisance to have to wait until eight o'clock, but maybe it was best after all. Things would be simpler in the dark. And now—Shavers looked at his watch. It was seven minutes since he had given orders to put DeWitt out of the way. It was time now to call the cops.

"Hello, detective bureau? . . . Say, that guy DeWitt you want for plugging Hall this morning just went up to Finicky Flynn's room . . . Yeah, on Greenwich Street. Better hurry."

Shavers hung up, rushed from the drug store, jumped in a taxi and sped across town.

Finicky Flynn half walked, half ran down 18th Street. His impulse was to get Cocky DeWitt out of his room somehow. It seemed futile, though. Max Shavers would certainly have the cops there before he could get home. His next thought was to call a cop and take him back to Shavers' loft. That wasn't much good, either. The cops might find the Weasel, if he hadn't managed to wriggle out from under the packing case, which he probably had. They'd find some stolen furs, maybe. But that wouldn't be much help in the present crisis. Perhaps he ought to ignore the whole business and go right to the lunch wagon. He ought to do that anyhow, before that fool Edwards ruined a lot of good food; Edwards never could cook a decent pot roast. Still that wouldn't advance things any. The cops would certainly come around to the Argonne Diner, after they'd pinched Cocky. Flynn might just as well go home and face it out. Maybe Shavers got cold feet, after all, and blew without sicking the cops on him and Cocky. It seemed pretty farfetched; but it was worth a try.

He saw the blue-and-white sign of a West Side subway station in front of him. He hurried his pace and ran down the steps. At Fourteenth Street he changed to an express. A few minutes later he was running down the sidewalk in the gloom of the "L" trestle. He was still fifty yards from his door when, above the roar of a passing "L" train, he heard the screech of a siren. He dropped into a rapid walk just as two motorcycles and an automobile swung around the corner. Just before he reached the door, Gloster, another detective and two uniformed policemen got out of the police car. Gloster barred the entrance with his arm.

"So you were lying to me after all!" growled the detective.

"Me? Lyin' to you?" protested Flynn. "What about?"

"You got James DeWitt hid away in your room," said Gloster.

"If I did, it wouldn't be nothin' to lie about," Flynn replied. "Cocky DeWitt ain't the man you want."

"That's for me to say." The heavy tread of ample feet resounded in the musty stairway as the four policemen, Gloster leading, started climbing.

"Listen, Mr. Gloster," Flynn called from the bottom step. "Give me till tonight, and I'll get you the bird that killed Officer Hall."

Gloster paused and turned around.

"You will?"

"Yeah. I got some new leads. I been workin' on this case."

"Well, don't. This case is already cluttered up with too damn many amateur detectives, what with the Furriers' Protective dicks underfoot every time we turn around. Blast them anyway!"

"This is different. I already located Max Shavers. He's the one that cracked me in the eye—"

"Where's Shavers?" Gloster took a step down.

"He got away," admitted Flynn reluctantly, "but—"

Gloster snorted incredulously and resumed climbing the stairs.

Flynn started after him. "Listen, Mr. Gloster," he called.

But Gloster would not listen. He was on the second landing already. The steps creaked as Flynn followed, hesitantly.

Above, he heard Gloster's bass voice swearing. He increased his stride to three steps at a time, came upon the group of policemen standing at his threshold. His door stood wide open. Gloster was examining marks on the wood about the lock. The door had evidently been jimmied. The two uniformed men were inside the room. Flynn pushed in with them.

There was no one else in the room. Cocky DeWitt was gone.

The policemen were ransacking the room.

The second plainclothesman called to Gloster from the open window.

"He could have got out here," he said, as he leaned out. "He could have slid down the drain pipe."

Gloster was glowering at Flynn.

"You made that fake phone call yourself, didn't you?" he said. "You wanted to get us over here so you could spill some more of your damned theories. DeWitt never was here."

"That's what I been tellin' you," said Flynn. "But I didn't make no phone call. I—"

With an oath Gloster pushed past him and went out. His retinue followed.

Finicky Flynn went back to the Argonne Diner. That louse DeWitt must have walked out on him to go back to Max Shavers. Probably couldn't stand being without his ration of dope. Well, the hell with him. Flynn had done all he could.

He found Edwards busy with half a dozen lunch customers. He put on his apron, tasted some of the things Edwards had prepared, made faces, added seasoning in an attempt at rescue. For the next hour and a half he was busy dishing out meals. He was not too busy, however, to note one new customer. With a slouch hat pulled down over his eyes, he was seated at the end stool. He ordered dish after dish, ate slowly and very little of each, and read a newspaper with great deliberation. He had been there an hour at least. He looked like a dick, Flynn reflected as he went to the pantry to slice some bacon from the side he kept hanging there.

Crouching among the sacks of potatoes and beans he saw Cocky DeWitt.

Flynn closed the door.

DeWitt stood up and spoke quickly in a breathless stage whisper. "Sorry, Finicky—I didn't have no other place to go. I left your room right after you did this morning— Somebody came up and knocked and called my name—I slid down the drain—I—"

The door burst open. The man with the slouch hat stood there, a gun in his fist.

"All right, DeWitt," he said. "Stick out your hands."

He flipped a pair of handcuffs out of his pocket, snapped them deftly about DeWitt's trembling wrists.

"Cocky didn't kill Hall," Flynn started to explain, "Cocky—"

"Oh, he didn't?" exclaimed the man with the slouch hat sarcastically. "Well, it happens that we got the gun that killed Hall. A guy picked it up and brought it in today and the ballistics expert identified it. The permit for that gun was issued to James DeWitt."

"But—"

"You come along too, Flynn."

"Me?" Flynn was dismayed, not at the thought of arrest, but at the thought that, in custody, he would be unable to continue his research in aid of DeWitt. Not that he had done much as yet, but—

"Come on!" ordered the man with the slouch hat, gesturing with his gun.

Cocky DeWitt made a sudden upward movement with his manacled hands. A detonation followed almost simultaneously as the gun discharged through the ceiling.

"Beat it, Finicky!"

Flynn bolted—not because he was afraid to face false charges

but because he still had an idea he could clear Cocky DeWitt. He ran out the back door, crossed a parking lot, threaded his way through traffic, dropped into a walk and at least for the moment achieved anonymity in the sidewalk crowds.

He spent the next two hours in the subway. It was the only place he could think of going at the time. He was lost in the crowds so far as the police were concerned. And he could think. He still had his theory, but he would have to find some way of making the cops listen to him. If he could only make Gloster take him seriously.

He got off several times to change trains, so that the guards would not become suspicious of him. Once he bought an evening paper. As he read the developments in the murder case, his eyes bulged:

Two suspected in the Pier H fur robbery and the subsequent murder of Policeman Patrick Hall were arrested at the same hour today in different parts of the city.

James DeWitt, ex-army cook was arrested in a West Street lunch wagon. DeWitt, police say, did the actual shooting. The permit for the gun that killed Hall was issued in his name.

P. H. Johnson, a red-haired youth who claims to be an unemployed market worker, was arrested when he applied for treatment at Bellevue Hospital for a bullet wound in his leg. Detective Harry Gloster says Johnson has been linked definitely to the crime.

At the next station Flynn jumped off the train, rushed to the first white-tiled telephone booth he saw, and called Police Headquarters.

"Hello, Gloster?" he said, after he asked to be connected with the detective bureau. "Say, where have you got that red-headed kid Johnson . . . Yes, it is my business. This is R. H. Flynn talkin' . . . Wait a minute. Hold on there before you start tracin' this call. I'm comin' in to give myself up pretty soon . . . Where's Johnson? Centre Street? O.K., I'll come in like a nice doggy if you promise to let me talk to Johnson before you lock me up . . . Well, I got an idear . . . I know you can't make no bargains, but I ain't askin' much . . . Just let me talk to Johnson for five minutes . . . O.K. . . . If I can count on you, you can count on me."

They searched Flynn when he showed up at Centre Street. Then they brought him into a room where Gloster was lighting a fat cigar, preparatory to a long questioning. As he started to open up, Flynn broke in

with: "Where's this kid Johnson?"

"Never mind Johnson," barked Gloster. "You're under arrest, Flynn. There's charges against you now. Resisting arrest, obstructing an officer, sheltering a criminal—"

"Listen, Gloster." Flynn's neck muscles became visible. "I come down here because you promised me I could talk to Johnson. I only want to help on this case—"

"The case is closed," snapped Gloster without removing his cigar.

"You didn't throw out that saucepan that was cookin' in the Jay Street place, did you?" asked Flynn anxiously.

"We will," answered Gloster. "We got all we need without it. We got DeWitt, we got the gun he killed Hall with, we got this redhead. All we need now is Shavers."

"You got to let me talk to this redhead," Flynn insisted.

"Give him a whoil at the kid," said an inspector who had jūst come in. "Maybe he can get something out of him. So far he's been as talkative as a Blue Pernt erster."

"All right," agreed Gloster reluctantly, his teeth clamped on his cigar. "But not alone. We stay."

Johnson limped into the room between two policemen. He flushed when he saw Flynn.

"Why did you have to show up?" Johnson demanded hotly. "I've kept my mouth shut in spite of all hell, to protect you."

"Protect me? I don't need no protection," countered Flynn. "All I want to know—"

"You were damned decent to me, and the least I could do was not to let you down," the redheaded youth continued, his tongue finally loosened. "I'm sorry I sneaked out without peeling your potatoes for you. But I got panicky when I heard the cop come into your place, and my leg was bleeding pretty much. I was afraid I'd have a hard time explaining a bullet wound in the leg. You see, I was mixed up in that shooting at Pier H—but I had nothing to do with it—"

"Nothing my eye!" exclaimed Gloster, but was motioned into silence by the inspector, who was watching the redhead and Flynn with keen, shrewd eyes.

"I'd sneaked into the pier shed to get out of the rain and cold for the night," Johnson explained. "I crawled in among some boxes and sacks to find a place to sleep. When the shooting started, I tried to get out and a stray bullet nicked me in the leg. Since I had no business to be in the pier shed in the first place, I ran—"

"That's his story," broke in Gloster. "But we got evidence

that ties him right up with the gang that's been stealing furs off the docks. Ain't we, Red?"

Johnson did not reply.

"What kind of evidence?" asked Flynn.

"Conclusive evidence," said Gloster. "Marked money. We been working on this case for several months. A private dick from the Furriers' Protective has kinda been working with us, and yesterday he passed out a pack of marked bills in payment for some stolen furs. One of the marked bills was in Red's pocket when we grabbed him. And he can't explain where he got the money—can you, Red?"

Johnson did not reply. He avoided Flynn's eyes.

Flynn suddenly sat forward in his chair, his eyes wide.

"Was it a two-dollar-bill?" he demanded eagerly.

"It was," said Gloster.

"Why, good God Almighty!" exclaimed Flynn. "The kid got that two bucks from me. I gave it to him!"

"So you're in on this too!"

"Hell, no! I got it outa the cash register. I took it in earlier in the night. Let me see—I got it from—" Flynn sprang to his feet. "Now I know who killed Hall!" he exclaimed. "Bojek! A spig longshoreman with a head like a hard-boiled egg. Bojek! That's the bird."

"Bojek? Say—isn't that the boid that found DeWitt's gat?" asked the inspector sharply.

"Yeah, that's his name."

"I should of thought of Bojek before," continued Flynn, running his fingers excitedly through his graying hair. "I knew all the time that the bird that was doing the cooking in that Jay Street room just before Hall was shot there was a Southern European of some kind. Did you notice the seasoning he had in that stuff in the pot? You could tell it with your eyes shut. There was a whiff of garlic and onions and bay leaves and thyme and saffron in it. I knew right away that wasn't Cocky DeWitt's cookin'. Nothin' he ever cooked had any taste at all to it. And I didn't think it was Shavers. Us—Anglo-Saxons don't cook like that. I knew there must of been some other guy in that room. And Bojek's the guy, gents!"

"How about that, Gloster?" asked the inspector. "We made Bojek's prints, didn't we? We found his prints on the gat, didn't we?"

"Sure. He handled it bringing it here. That's why we printed him, so we could tell his from the others."

"Did you find any other prints on the gat? Did you find DeWitt's?"

"Well, no, we didn't."

"Go out and get Bojek!" snapped the inspector.

"Why'd this guy Bojek want

to kill Hall?" grumbled Gloster.

"He's one of Max Shavers' boys," said Flynn. "He and a truck driver named Mars was in my place waitin' for Max the night of all the shootin'. Bojek bein' a longshoreman, he'd have ways of gettin' his hand into packin' cases on the docks. He must of had somethin' incriminatin' on him when Hall walked in on him over in Jay Street. So he plugged Hall to make his getaway—that's all."

As Gloster got to his feet, the phone rang. He reached out to answer it.

"Hello . . . Yeah, Letterman . . . Where? . . . On the ramp? . . . Half an hour? . . . O.K. We'll be there all right."

Gloster hung up. He shifted his cigar from one side of his mouth to the other.

"It's that Furriers' Protective dick," he said. "He says he's got a date with the dock thieves on the Manhattan ramp of Brooklyn Bridge, in half an hour. Want me to go?"

"Go on," said the inspector. "I'll look out for things here. I'm going to turn the redhead loose." He nodded toward Flynn. "And you better take Sherlock Holmes here with you."

Max Shavers and Bojek were both in the car that drove up the Brooklyn Bridge ramp, with Mars, Bojek's friend, at the wheel. A long low Isotta-Fraschini coupé, driven by a man in dinner jacket, turned onto the ramp to follow them. When Shavers' car slowed to a crawl. The foreign coupé drew alongside, slowed also, and the man in the dinner jacket handed a packet to Shavers.

"Jump on the gas, Mars!" Shavers ordered when he had the packet in his hands. But Mars jumped on the brakes instead. Another car had suddenly cut in ahead of him and pulled to a stop. A third car boxed him in from the rear. Guns bristled in all three cars. Shavers, Bojek, and Mars surrendered without a struggle.

"This is Letterman, the Furriers' Protective dick," said Gloster afterwards, introducing Flynn to the man in the evening clothes.

"I've met him," said Flynn. "Say, listen, Gloster. How about lettin' Cocky DeWitt out, now that I've got the right bird for you?"

"There's still charges against DeWitt," said Gloster.

"But I can fix it to put up bail for him," said Flynn. "I'll—" He looked at his watch. "Good God!" he exclaimed. "I got to be gettin' back to the lunch wagon or that guy Edwards'll be losin' me every reg'lar customer I got with his rotten cookin'."

—Continued From Back Cover

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